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*Fr.*

Queen Elizabeth

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# IN TUDOR TIMES

*SHORT CHARACTER-STUDIES OF  
THE GREAT ELIZABETHANS*

*BY*

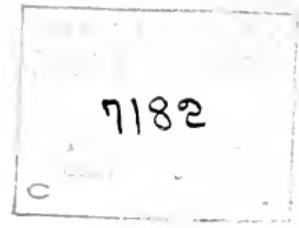
EDITH L. ELIAS

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# In Tudor Times

## Introduction

A GREAT Atlantic liner was leaving the bustling landing-stage of an English seaport. On board were not less than three thousand souls, passengers and crew all told. Her proportions were noble, her fittings as faultless as modern ideas of luxury could demand. The best of many brains had been spent in her contrivance ; everything about her spoke of strength, ingenuity, comfort. As she began to make her way slowly over the grey-green waters she went with the stately movement of a queen ; and at each proud motion forward, like a woman shaking out the frills of her gown, she scattered behind her circles upon circles of creamy foam. At the landward end of the stage a man stood watching her depart. His eyes were fixed upon her dreamily, noting each point of her beauty. Then, as he looked, a strange thing came to pass. For the vessel of thirty thousand tons vanished, swiftly, as if she had been engulfed by the eager grey-green waves, and in her place there appeared a tiny barque atrim with canvas and of barely one hundred tons freightage.

The spectator noted another important point of difference ; the direction had become changed. Whereas the first had been going from the stage, the second was coming towards it.

Steadily the little ship advanced, and as she drew nearer, the man who was watching had time to notice her battered condition, her ancient contrivances, her torn and discoloured sails. Then all was lost to his sight as a multitude of people rushed hurriedly forward, shaking the stage. Pell-mell they went, panting, scrambling, gesticulating. At once a great shout went up and it was as if the air had been rent like a sheet of linen. "Drake, Drake!" they shouted: "Drake!"

The man at the landward end of the stage shook himself sharply and drew in his breath with a quick gasp. Then he too pressed forward to welcome Drake, who was returning, as if by a miracle, from the first voyage round the world ever made by an Englishman.

But even as he pressed forward, at that moment the shouts died away, and though he strained his eyes to their utmost he could no longer catch a glimpse of that travel-stained, weather-worn craft on which the great Drake had stood. But out at sea he saw as before, the great liner, now far distant on the horizon, ploughing her proud way across the billows.

. . . . .  
The greatness of the Tudor epoch is not confined to matters of the sea. Within its limits are to be reckoned some of the most momentous years in English history. It opened with the reign of the parsimonious Henry VII.; it closed with the death of the judicious Elizabeth; it knew also the control of the despotic Henry VIII.; of the studious Edward VI.; of the fanatical Mary. Similarity of temperament and policy marks the reigns of Henry VIII. and his royal daughter Elizabeth, but otherwise the sovereigns whose names come within the confines of the period, represent ideals and characters which differ widely from one another. Mary's highly-strung, intense dis-

position was the antithesis of the calculating virtue of her sister ; Edward VI.'s simple, but too easily moved nature was far removed from either his father's dictatorial statesmanship or the suspicious inclination of his grandfather, Henry VII.

Meanwhile under the control of these several sovereigns the nation was rapidly evolving an individuality. Henry VII. hoarded the money which enabled Henry VIII. to prosecute his policy of independence. Edward VI. and Mary, as well as Henry VIII., contributed largely towards Elizabeth's settlement of the Church question. Elizabeth's judicious choice of the "middle way," which had ever been zealously followed by her father before her, made possible the establishment of a national Church. Her subjects, with the remembrance of the reign of Edward and Mary still in their minds, were well aware of the evil attendant upon extremes, and therefore they were for the most part content to adopt the compromise dictated by their Queen. The growth of a national spirit brought with it a wider outlook. Commerce with other countries rapidly increased. Rumours of the wonderful lands seen by those who had successfully navigated foreign waters stirred the imagination, and as a direct result the first attempts at colonisation were begun. Towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth a more humane spirit began to be manifested. Greater attention was given to the study of medicine ; the profession of the surgeon was separated from that of the barber, with which it had been so far invariably associated. Sympathy became a more prominent virtue. News of the cruelties of the Inquisition roused the liveliest abhorrence : from the first, English spirit boldly and vigorously opposed the use of torture as a means of extracting information. Even the most despotic English

sovereign understood the temper of the nation too well to offend in this direction. Though cruel and barbarous laws were enforced against vagrancy, and though branding was a common punishment for theft, the more odious tortures devised by the infamous ingenuity of the Spaniards were never regularly practised in England.

With the extension of the outlook of the nation, came the broadening of ideas about luxury. The dress of women was extravagant and men's attire even more so. Elizabeth is said to have had a thousand gowns in her cupboards at the time of her death, and remembering the character of that great queen the statement may quite reasonably be true. Too parsimonious to part with garments for which she could have no further possible use, and too vain not to indulge the most extravagant of her personal fancies, Elizabeth may easily have had a wardrobe of this ridiculous extent.

The home, too, underwent a great change at this period. Windows began to be fitted with comely glass ; silver platters became common ; furniture was more comfortable and more costly. The use of chimneys altered the whole manner of daily living ; neatness and even elegance began to be observable in houses which had formerly been marred by smoke, discomfort and dirt. Under the new régime a guest in a noble house would find himself luxuriously sheltered, and a song of the time describes the care with which preparations were made to welcome a royal personage :

*" Set me fine Spanish tables in the hall,  
See they be fitted all ;  
Let there be room to eat  
And order taken that there want no meat.  
See every sconce and candlestick made bright  
That without tapers they may give a light.  
Look to the presence ; are the carpets spread  
The dais o'er the head,*

*The cushions in the chairs.  
And all the candles lighted on the stairs,  
Perfume the chambers and in every case  
Let each man have attendance in his place.*<sup>11 1</sup>

With the advance of material comforts came the development of intellectual delights. Books soon became quite common ; eager students sprang up on every hand ; the art of writing was a passion. Under such favourable circumstances learning rapidly advanced, and the reign of Elizabeth, already resplendent by its group of poets, essayists and dramatists, was made for ever glorious by the career of William Shakespeare. Thus this great period came to a close in a blaze of triumph. The power of the throne had been established at home and abroad ; henceforward no foreign potentate could claim any control over England, whether in the matter of Church or of State. Yet notwithstanding these changes the independence of the people was still reserved to them. The apparent despotism of the sovereign rested in reality on the love and the free allegiance of the nation, and before the one could be upheld, the other must be granted. The Church had passed safely through a severe crisis ; the Navy had been not only established, but it had proved its worth ; literature had become luminous by an outburst of genius ; commerce and foreign enterprise of every kind had developed enormously ; and the general material conditions of life had been vastly improved. One hundred and forty years before the death of Elizabeth the Wars of the Roses were still raging, yet within the limits marked by the accession of Henry in 1485 and the end of the Tudor dynasty in 1603, such had been the general advance, that instead of being a battle-ground of internal strife, England had indeed become a “nest of singing birds.”

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Bullen's *Lyrics from the Song Books of the Elizabethan Age.*



# Phase I—The Kingship

## HENRY VII

*“As for the disposition of his subjects in general towards him, it stood thus with him: that of the three affections, which naturally tie the hearts of the subjects to their sovereigns, love, fear and reverence, he had the last in height, the second in good measure, and so little of the first, as he was beholden to the other two.”*

BACON, “History of Henry the Seventh”

**I**N the year 1485, Henry VII., then twenty-eight years of age, ascended the throne. His accession was one of no ordinary moment. It signalled the beginning not merely of a new reign but of a new epoch, an epoch of greater importance than had yet been known in English history. The foundations underlying this transformation had been laid long ago in the reign of Edward IV., and the character and government of Henry VII. can only be understood by considering the conditions which link his reign with that of the Yorkist sovereign. It was Edward who had first definitely set about building up a self-sufficient monarchy which should tower in state above all other institutions and dwarf into insignificance every other form of power; which should so dominate the people that they would by-and-by learn to crave its dominance, since in nothing else would they be able to find security, or that sense of stability necessary for the peaceful and prosperous conduct of their daily occupations. Inspired by this aim, Edward had looked into the future with a keen, imperious glance, calculating to a nicety the possible

obstacles which might obstruct the path of future monarchs of England. No second glance was needed to convince him that the chief centre of opposition to his ambition would lie in the continuance of the feudal system. Every lord was still a centre round whom there revolved a company of men—well-to-do farmers, smiths and the like—who might any day rise and constitute a small army.

Did there come an occasion for revolt, straight-way every man was ready to drop his work, seize his weapons and follow his lord to the field. No elaborate preparations were needed to set such an army on foot. A single call from the castle and at once every loyal hand grasped its bow; every foot drummed the ground in impatience to obey the summons. Tingling with excitement they would set off to learn more of what the signal might mean, and soon the grey silence of the courtyard of the castle would be broken by the sound of bugles and the clattering of feet as the men assembled. Amid the hurry and bustle that followed, hearts would grow stouter under the words of encouragement which would be exchanged on all sides, while bowstrings were being rapidly tightened. Then when all was in trim array the word of command would be given, and the great lord himself, gorgeous in his shining armour and his fluttering plumes, would ride forth, surrounded by his knights on horseback, to take his place at the head of the company. Thus they would pass under the grim old gateway; a band of soldiers, strange enough to our modern eyes, yet representing an agility, a staunchness, a courage, and an endurance that were all the greater because they were excited to meet the need of one who was no stranger to them; a lord whom they reverenced as their leader and at the same time regarded with the affection that springs from close and dependent association. This tie of affection is the explana-

tion of the extraordinary ease with which, in the Middle Ages, insurrections sprang into sudden and evanescent action. Kingship had not yet acquired over the people the distinctive and overpowering influence it was afterwards to gain. Looking for government as they did to their feudal lords, cut off from communication with the world beyond their own little village or township, with no papers to bring news, no easy means of travelling, it is not remarkable that the figure of the king was more or less shadowy in the minds of the people generally, nor that they should trust almost implicitly in the man they recognised as their feudal superior. Edward IV.'s keen intellect, coupled with his intimate knowledge of the despotic position which could be attained by a noble of too great popularity and wealth, soon made him convinced that if the Crown were to prove itself effective in the eyes of the nation it must do so by conquering the nobles. To this end he bent all his energies, and although, to the careless eye of the courtier, he might seem merely engrossed in frivolities, or concerned only about trivial matters, in reality his eye was fixed on the future ; and only one object occupied his attention, that of consolidating the supremacy of the Crown. Under a velvet glove he concealed a hand of iron ; yet so skilfully did he hide the fact, and so enormous was his popularity at first, that many of his tyrannies were not suspected to be such by his subjects till it was too late for them to make resistance. All that they could do was to rage at their impotence and mutter vague threats against the arbitrary dealings of their monarch. Richard III. on his accession was wise enough to acknowledge the discontent which was surging round the Crown like an angry sea, only kept from sweeping away the throne itself by the strong breakwater of sovereignty that Edward IV. had set up. How bitterly the people resented

the repression under which they struggled is evidenced by the petition of the citizens of London in which they declared : “ We be determined rather to advocate and to commit us to the peril of our lives and jeopardy of death, than to live in such thraldom and bondage as we have lived long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new infractions against the laws of God and man and the liberty and laws of this land wherein every Englishman is inherited.”

With wily readiness Richard granted their demands, convoked Parliament and declared “ benevolences ” illegal. But in spite of this show of fairness he was at heart more of a tyrant than ever Edward had been. For if Edward had been despotic, he had also been actuated by a desire to enhance the value of the Crown. Richard on the other hand was bent only on satisfying his selfish and evil desires. His splendid courage in battle did not atone for his many vices. If he were open-handed when it pleased him to be so, he could also be mean and revengeful. If he were courageous, he was also cruel. There is justice in the picture drawn of him by R. L. Stevenson in the *Black Arrow* : “ ‘ Our Crookback,’ observed the archer, ‘ is a bold blade and a good warrior ; but whether in cold blood or not, he will have all things exact to his commandment. If any fail or hinder, they shall die the death. . . . And if he spare not the blood and sweat of others he is ever liberal of his own, still in the first front of battle, still the last to sleep. He will go far will Crookback.’ ”

How far he went is evident from the swift and tragic end of his career when the battle of Bosworth dashed all his hopes to the ground and robbed himself of life.

Such was the position of affairs when Henry VII. succeeded to the throne in 1485. The field of Bosworth was still strewn with the bodies of those who had fallen in

the terrible carnage of a battle which ended the Wars of the Roses, marked the overthrow of feudalism and signalled the consolidation of a new monarchy. Upon the foundations laid with such thoroughness and care by Edward IV. now began to rise the walls of that edifice of imperial government which was to find its coping-stone in the reign of Elizabeth. Twenty-eight years of age, Henry was in the very prime of young manhood. His intellect was at its keenest. The lessons of the three previous reigns had not been without effect upon him. Peace and stability became the motto of his policy, and in this determination he mounted the throne in the auspicious year 1485.

Three circumstances tended to make Henry's task of asserting the self-sufficiency of the Crown comparatively easy. In the first place the long struggle of the Wars of the Roses had largely diminished the number of nobles, while those who still survived the horrors of the prolonged and hideous conflict were so broken in fortune that they were incapable of raising any serious resistance.

The second great circumstance was to be found in the futility of arrows against gunpowder as a force in war. Although gunpowder itself had been known since the time of Crecy, it was not till the days of the Tudors that its full power was comprehended, or it was used to any appreciable extent. Now matters had changed in this respect. The days were over when a man was ready for battle by merely snatching his bow from its peg. A rebel army could no longer be arranged in the old hasty way. Gunpowder was a first necessity, and gunpowder was jealously held by the sovereign. Thus dissatisfied rebels were without the most important means of waging war, and finding that arrows were of little use they fell back upon grumbling, which, being less insistent than arrows,

seldom reached as far as the palace chambers. Added to these two circumstances, the downfall of feudalism and the need of gunpowder to supply an army, the marriage of Henry with Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV. and Elizabeth Woodville, was in itself immensely popular and everywhere acclaimed with delight. Not only was it a marriage which united the two rival houses and settled the wrangle over the opposing claims, but it was an earnest of a peace which would be of enormous benefit to the citizen bent upon securing a fair livelihood, and anxious to uphold any monarchy that held out a prospect of continuous quiet years, in which trade might be developed. Therefore at the outset Henry had everything in his favour, and he was free to develop the constitution in the direction that pleased him best. Weary of disputes and the noise of battle, the new king doggedly narrowed his gaze, and kept ever before his eyes his motto of peace and stability. This ambition after consolidation was moreover fostered by his personal leanings towards economy. He shrank scarcely less from bloodshed than from the expense of war. Moreover he realised that once the money credit of the sovereign could be established, then the monarch would be able to extend his power and gradually increase the greatness of his position. For by having a substantial exchequer to fall back upon, he could be independent of his parliament and thus become more and more self-sufficient. He realised further that by wringing large sums of money from the nobles he would cripple their strength and keep them from embarking upon enterprises dangerous to the Crown. To this end he lost no opportunity of obtaining for his coffers as much gold as he could seize ; and many and ingenious were the devices by which he wrested money from the reluctant fingers of his subjects. No display of wealth could escape the

rapacious keenness of his eye, and it is told that on one occasion when he visited the Earl of Oxford and found two rows of liveried servants drawn up to do him honour, he observed to his host as he left : “ I thank you for your good cheer, my lord, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.” With a forced smile the earl bowed to acknowledge the remark, and grimly handed over to the attorney the sum of £15,000 which was exacted as a fine.

A sovereign who could show himself so rigid towards one from whom he had just accepted such lavish hospitality must needs have been of an inflexible temperament. Nothing turned Henry aside from a policy deliberately adopted. Always unruffled, always self - possessed, he moved slowly along the line he had mapped out for himself. But if he moved slowly he also moved always. Like a tortoise he crept on his way doggedly, determined to fulfil his purpose. So he quietly got what he had set out to acquire, and if the country sometimes repined bitterly at his extortions, it also reaped the benefit of control by a hand at once prudent and tenacious. Under the steadiness of this guidance, trade rapidly developed, and citizens could afford to acquiesce in a rule which brought them peace and opportunities for increasing their wealth.

This interval of calm, moreover, had another influence. By inducing men to turn their minds from thoughts of warfare, it greatly fostered the intellectual movement known as the New Learning, by which literature, long allowed to lie uncared for in the gutter, was raised to a new eminence.

Meanwhile Henry himself looked on everything with his calm detachment, and while in reality he cared very little for the welfare of his subjects or the advancement

of learning, he steered his course in a way that proved to be the best possible that at the moment could have been adopted. A clear-eyed, cold, self-centred man, anxious at all costs to keep himself free from the harassing terrors of war, he governed the country for twenty-four years with a wisdom which, if founded upon selfishness, was nevertheless of the highest benefit to his subjects. But he did not impress himself upon the minds of the people save as a ruler, and he never gained their affection. He governed well, and though they fumed with helpless rage against his fines and exactions, yet they recognised that he had brought them peace, and with peace, development of trade. For this they were grateful, and when they learned of his death, though they felt no personal regret, it may well have been that not a few remarked to one another : "He ruled wisely and gave us a calm and happy country."

## HENRY VIII

*"O ceremony ! show me but thy worth :  
What is thy soul of adoration ?  
Art thou aught else but place, degree and form,  
Creating awe and fear in other men ?  
Wherein thou art less happy being fear'd  
Than they in fearing."*

SHAKESPEARE

NOT yet eighteen years of age when he became king in succession to his father, Henry VIII. mounted a throne firmly established upon the solid basis of peace and stability which had been the persistent aim of Henry VII. Moreover he found at his disposal coffers stocked with a wealth which had been wrung from the fingers of an unwilling nation and heaped up by the economy of the last monarch. Nearly two million pounds lay waiting for the son's pleasure. Would he spend it, or would he continue his father's policy and make the glittering pile steadily greater ? This was a question which the young king soon settled. Hoarded gold was of no value in his eyes, and he lost no time in plunging his arm elbow deep into the golden treasure and spending it with a recklessness that nothing but his youth and inexperience could excuse. For the time being all seemed well. The people looked with an admiration almost amounting to idolatry upon the handsome young figure of the new monarch, and no cottage was without its little group who talked with enthusiasm and pride about the brilliant young king. At court there was the same display of unaffected admiration, and so from

village to Westminster there floated a chorus of praise which must have fallen very pleasantly upon the ears of the newly-made sovereign.

And indeed there was good reason for much of this praise, for not only was Henry noble and attractive in person but he was possessed of great courage and skill in all manner of sports, while his natural disposition was generous and open in the extreme.

The first acts of his reign were marked by a large-minded nobility which was the outcome of a genuine desire to govern justly and well. Therefore when he turned sternly upon the hated pair, Empson and Dudley, who had been the instruments used by Henry VII. for the exactation of unlawful fines, the people felt that here indeed was a king among kings, and no extravagant compliment was too great to bestow upon him.

But it was not only among the people that the note of praise ran high. Every subject saw in the temper of the king hopes of reform and progress. None were more enthusiastic than the group of scholars bent upon forwarding a revival of learning. Ostensibly encouraged by Henry VII., their movement had been hindered by the coldness of his disposition, which never showed more than a smouldering interest in any schemes connected with the development of knowledge. Moreover his jealous suspicions had been roused by the fact that the first impulse of the New Learning had come from abroad, and he looked with only half-concealed aversion upon a movement which, having originated in a country other than his own, might be the means of involving England either in foreign warfare or in foreign competition which would be disastrous to herself.

Idle fears such as these found no corner in which to lurk in the more active mind of Henry VIII. He was as



King Henry VIII.  
Holbein

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heartily for activity and warfare as his father had been for peace and stability. There was genuine warmth in the welcome which he held out to the promoters of learning, who were not slow to avail themselves of the invitation to sun themselves in the beams of royal favour.

Thus the eager young king began his reign in a temper from which the most cautious felt justified in saying that "all excellent things were to be hoped."

But those who had seen in the king only a desire to maintain a wise and generous government during which commerce and learning could thrive apace, soon found that they had been mistaken. For a time the cares of government and the excitement of ruling his people were enough for Henry's restless energy. By-and-by, however, the novelty of administration began to wear off and his ardent spirit turned to find other outlets for its energies. The idea of conquest had ever been one that stirred the warm blood of the young ruler, and now that he found himself in possession of wealth and power, he began to form plans by which he might extend his rule beyond that of his own island country. His daring eye soon fixed itself upon France, and while he seemed to be immersed in matters concerning affairs at home, his mind was in reality busy upon schemes by which he might best revive the old claims to the French throne which had never been totally abandoned. An alliance with Spain was therefore of the first importance, and this he already possessed through his marriage with Catharine of Arragon.

Definite action was not long postponed, and two years after his accession, Henry flung aside domestic cares and plunged with undisguised enthusiasm into war with France. At once the rose-coloured spectacles which had hitherto blinded the eyes of his subjects, dropped to the ground. So far he had seemed to them as something more than a

hero. But now as they watched the light-hearted way in which the treasury was recklessly exhausted over a war which could offer England no reward in the end, they realised that the aim of the sovereign lay not so much in the advancement of his country as in the indulgence of personal pride.

Yet if on the one hand Henry might be accused of robbing the Crown of some of its strength by drawing too recklessly upon its exchequer, on the other hand, by aiming at making himself a resplendent figure among European monarchs he was increasing the value of the throne abroad in a very substantial way. It is true that personal advancement was his first instinct, but coupled with this was a genuine desire to place the Crown on a pinnacle, and these two motives gradually became so fused that the one implied the other. As Henry developed in maturity he aimed more and more at making the Crown—and thereby himself—the only real power in the kingdom. This desire, sprung partly from selfish inclination, partly from intuitive statesmanship, steadily gained possession of the young monarch till it had become so much the mark of his ambition that at last his whole energies were given up to its pursuit.

Bitterly as his policy of war was resented everywhere throughout the country, it nowhere called forth louder cries of disgust than among the adherents of the New Learning. Their golden dream of a tranquil England, in the security of which they would be free to develop their plans for the extension of letters, was rudely dashed to the ground. Resentment rose in their hearts at the prospect, and the fury of Colet rose to such a height that he openly declared from the pulpit of St Paul's that "an unjust peace was better than the justest war."

But Henry's mind was far too firmly set on conquest

for him to pay any heed to the signs of disappointment round him, and nothing but the want of money made him relinquish his campaign in 1514. Nevertheless in spite of the peace, enough had happened to show the people the way in which the king's ambition tended, and they did not hesitate to say among themselves that the fair prospects which they had thought would follow upon his accession had already become blurred.

Meanwhile, in his palace, the vigorous sovereign was still bending his mind upon schemes for securing the absolute supremacy of the Crown. The more he contemplated the idea, the dearer it seemed to him, till at last he felt that only this could ever satisfy his craving desire for power. From this point he exerted himself openly and unreservedly to achieve his ends ; it became the question of his life, and nothing that would be likely to bring it about was allowed to remain undone. For this purpose he quarrelled with the Pope ; for this purpose he favoured the Reformation ; for this purpose he threw himself into extending the Revival of Learning. To obtain his end he was forced to the conclusion that either he must convene Parliament or he must resort to illegal measures. Conscious that the Commons would meet his petition for supplies with demands for reform, he avoided calling them together, and instead he fell back upon the vicious system of benevolences. This was in 1525, only fourteen years after he had assumed the crown amid such open expressions of delight. How different the picture then and now ! How far the king they had deemed the embodiment of everything noble and just had fallen from the high estimate which his people had formed of him !

But although the generous impulses which distinguished Henry at the beginning of his reign had become clouded by the shadow of his desire for a complete supremacy, he

was nevertheless too far-sighted and clever a ruler to allow his despotism to be so open in character that it would stir up revolt. He strove to grasp the reins tightly, yet with such skill, that the people themselves should be unaware of the grip in which they were held. He aimed at obtaining power through means that his shrewdness told him would in the end certainly benefit his subjects. At the same time he had no intention of letting any such measures develop upon any lines except those chosen by himself. He determined that he himself should so control and direct everything that he would be able to feel that he had the destiny of the nation within his power to mould as he chose. To do this he saw that England must be free from every kind of bondage to a foreign power. An acknowledgment of the Pope on the part of any kingdom implied that such a country was subject to the jurisdiction of one over whom it had no control. Before the Sovereign of England could be supreme, his dominion must be secured from any such tie. Therefore Henry deliberately set about causing a rupture between England and Rome. In this he was at first entirely actuated by political motives, though the question of divorce later brought personal feeling into the matter. Under his rule the Reformation was not only set on foot but gained ground, though there is no evidence to show that the king's share in it sprang from any religious motive whatever. He was aiming at a supremacy that necessitated the isolation of the sovereign ; for as long as the king bent before the Pope the power of the Crown was divided. To one of Henry's imperious temper such a division was intolerable. Yet it required no small courage to break with Rome. A less daring heart than his would have shrunk from such a challenge. But whatever the faults of Henry VIII. his spirit glowed like a live coal within him, and fear was

an emotion which never possessed him. Almost nonchalantly he flung his defiance to Rome, but his careless gesture merely veiled the temper in which he prepared to maintain his action. His determination was of steel.

In his endeavours towards securing a supreme monarchy, Henry was enormously assisted by two men of strong character, Wolsey and Cromwell, who each in turn gave to their sovereign a service which he had ability enough to appraise but not sufficient affection to appreciate. In each instance the giving was all on the side of the minister and if in return the king lavished expensive presents, he was never betrayed into a show of love. Both laid at his feet a devotion which he ill repaid. Whether Henry ever felt the thrill of real affection for any human being is doubtful. This at least is certain, that any such emotion was of transitory occurrence and was never allowed to encroach upon policies of expediency.

Meanwhile the condition of the labouring classes throughout the country was becoming daily more and more gloomy. Henry's scheme of consolidating the supremacy of the Crown might be of enormous future importance in establishing the country as a power of first rank amongst foreign nations, but for the moment the necessity for money to accomplish his designs made him press heavily upon the common people who were all too poor to be able to afford the money his rapacity exacted from them. Despondency began to settle upon the land like a thick cloud ; men went about their work with mutterings on their lips, and no adjective was too bitter to fling at the name of Thomas Cromwell, the king's untiring agent in the quest for supplies. The destruction of the lesser monasteries, which in spite of their many abuses were yet of vital importance in the country life of the peasants,

thickened the mists upon the horizon, and those who knew how to interpret the signs of the times said openly among themselves that it could not be long before the storm broke out in fury. Popular ballads repeated the story of discontent and fostered the feeling of revolt from north to south, and from east to west. Of these ballads, *Vox Populi* recorded the predominant feeling with extreme fearlessness and there was no mistaking the drift of words which declared :

*"I pray you be not wroth  
For uttering of the truth.*

*So that your plowmen say  
They still pay, pay,  
Most willingly alway,  
But yet they see no stay  
Of this outrage array,  
Vox populi, vox Dei,  
O most noble King,  
Consider well this thing.*

*And yet not long ago  
Were preachers one or two  
That spake plain enough  
To you, to you, to you.*

*That from pillar to post  
The poor man he was toss't.  
I mean the labouring man,  
I mean the husbandman,  
I mean the ploughing man,  
I mean the handicraft man,  
I mean the victualling man,  
And also the good yeoman,  
That some time in this realm  
Had plenty o' kine and cream,  
Butter, eggs and cheese,  
Honey, wax, and bees.*

*But now, alack ! alack !  
All these men go to wrack,  
That are the body and stay  
Of your grace' realm alway.*

*For, poor men, they do cry  
And say it is awry ;  
They say they cannot be heard  
But still each day deferred,  
When they have any suit,  
They may go blow their flute ;  
Thus goes the common bruit.  
The rich man will come in,  
For he is sure to win,  
For he can make his way,  
With hand in hand to pay,  
Both to the thick and thin :  
Or else to know their pleasure  
My lord is not at leisure ;  
The poor man at the door  
Stands like an island cur,  
And dare not oncē stir,  
Except he go his way  
And come another day :*

*Vox populi, vox Dei  
O most noble King,  
Consider well this thing.”*

If the miserable condition of the poor could be stated so boldly in a petition intended for perusal by the sovereign, it is evident that the feeling of resentment must have been of extraordinary depth. The harassed people, robbed on this side and on that, saw not only present gloom around them but a yet deeper blackness in the future, and there was desperation in the hearts of those who rose under Robert Aske in 1536 to set out on what is known as the Pilgrimage of Grace.

The moment was critical, and it was a question how

Henry would meet the demands of the insurrectionists. Perhaps he would even yet answer just demands with fair deeds. Maybe, they said, he would now throw over the hated ministers and exhibit something of that generous consideration which had marked his actions at the beginning of his reign. The eyes of all the peasant class were turned expectantly in the direction of the king, as the news of the insurrection was made known. Henry himself was alive to the intensely critical nature of the rebellion. He saw that it signified the opinion not merely of a handful of men, but of a whole people. With his unerring wisdom he proclaimed a pardon for the rebels and promised that a free Parliament should be assembled at York.

Delighted at the prospect of such a benefit, and won over by the magnetism of the king's personality, the men who had come out to fight against their sovereign flung down the badges they had worn as their signal of revolt and shouted aloud exultantly : " We will wear no badge but that of our lord the king."

What were Henry's feelings as he heard their cries of unaffected enthusiasm ? For the moment, no doubt, he was animated by generous intentions, and the thoughts of exciting the goodwill of his people may have set his pulses throbbing. But the emotion soon passed, and he was once more the cold monarch, intent on a policy of making his Crown supreme. With base readiness he leant his ear to Cromwell's demand for vengeance upon those who had so lately separated, shouting aloud their loyalty and their delight. Soon gibbets all over the country stood as mute signs of the worthlessness of the king's promise. According to Greene, " whole districts were given up to military execution," and many a noble was hurried out of life ; while to complete the severity, Lady Bulmer was burnt at the stake.

The Council of the North, which was instituted as the direct result of the rebellion, showed the gravity with which Henry viewed the movement, and how fiercely he was determined that no will but his should be of any effect in the land. The news of this fresh instrument of oppression was met with silence on the part of the country; but it was the dogged silence of a people profoundly discontented.

From this date to the close of his reign, Henry strenuously pursued the policy he had mapped out for himself. The Greater Monasteries met with the same fate as the Lesser, and war against France was vigorously prosecuted. Even Cromwell, strong as he was, and much as he had done to promote Henry's greatness, fell at last before a monarch who would admit of no will but his own. No tie whether of blood, or marriage, or friendship was sacred in the eyes of one who was so entirely engrossed in attaining the impassive heights of absolute supremacy. When death came to Henry in 1547 he seemed at the very height of his power. Nevertheless there were not wanting signs of a disaffection that might shake even the pillars of a supreme throne. Faint though these indications may have been, they were not too faint to be without significance. The greedy demands which had followed the fall of the monasteries had produced in the people a feeling of revulsion, which found expression in the general uneasiness evident throughout the country at the beginning of the reign of Edward VI.

Nevertheless Henry VIII. may be accounted a man who realised his ambition. He left behind him such an indelible impression of strong personality that to-day he stands out among the monarchs of England with vivid boldness. He was possessed of a disposition of splendid natural courage, but his character was marred by that strain of selfishness and tyranny which is seen nowhere

more odiously than in his conduct towards his hapless wives. His general policy was daringly original, and none but a man of unusual boldness would have dared to act with the detachment which he showed upon all occasions. By his powerful guidance he at once lifted England out of the provincial rut and gave her an assured position in the eyes of Europe. He promoted the Reformation ; he fostered learning ; he encouraged commerce. But the heel of his rule pressed heavily upon the necks of his subjects, and many had cause to bemoan the spoliation and ruin which he brought upon them. Yet it is to be remembered that, terrible as were many of the deeds of his reign, he rendered England an incalculable benefit in freeing her from foreign intervention and in giving her a personality and an independence that she could never otherwise have possessed.



King Edward VI.

Holbein

Photo W. A. Mansell & Co.

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## EDWARD VI

*"This child was so bred, had such parts, was of such expectation, that he looked like a miracle of a man, and in him was such an attempt of Nature that not only England, but the world had reason to lament his being so early snatched away."*

CARDEN

**W**HEN the sceptre dropped from the powerful grip of Henry VIII. it fell into the childish, delicate hands of a boy barely ten years old. Many looked on with apprehension as they watched the change, for how should one of such tender years and inexperience hope to battle with the tremendous issues which were then at stake in England ? If Henry VIII., with all his indomitable determination, had only kept his position by the expense of ceaseless energy, what would happen when a mere boy, and one moreover of so gentle and confiding a disposition as Edward, should wear the crown of kingship ? Despair had for a moment numbed the heart of Henry, ere he passed away, when he foresaw the difficulties which would press upon his young son and successor. Yet even in this extremity his keen mind had set itself to grapple with the problem, and as a means of preserving intact that independency and security which he had made his aim, he appointed that during the minority of the king the government should be in the hands of a council led by the Earl of Hertford. No pains were spared to make the council efficient and at the same time representative of both the more moderate and more extreme parties in the Church. Once and again the king went over

the list, now striking out a name, now putting in another, till at last he was satisfied with the result. With something like a sigh he declared the scheme complete, and silence fell upon him for a space as he tried to peer into the future and see his son occupying the office which he himself was about to relinquish. But however carefully the monarch might plan out the course to be adopted after his death, he could by no means assure its carrying out ; and immediately after Henry's death, Lord Hertford (better known by his later title, the Duke of Somerset), dismissed from the council those whose views did not coincide with his own. Then, seizing the entire power into his own hands, he assumed the title of Lord Protector. Up and down the country people commented freely on his action. Some denounced him roundly ; others were as fiercely in his favour. Those who were loudest in their abuse of him were the upholders of the old order of things in the Church ; for the Protector's leaning towards the reforming party was well known. The members of this latter body were, therefore, delighted with the news and hastened to show their enthusiasm. At once Henry's carefully planned scheme for maintaining a balance between the extremists on either side was drawn into the whirlpool of contention, and the struggle between the two sections of the Church rose higher than ever. The increased fierceness of the flame which thus shot up, and threw so lurid a glare on the tense, eager faces of the members of both parties, was to some extent due to the death of Henry and the consequent accession of Edward, but it cannot be put down wholly to these causes. Cromwell had long ago seen that the struggle of the Reformation could never be settled by any other way than by a complete breach with the Catholic Church abroad. Men of lofty mind, like Sir Thomas

More, who belonged to the old way of thinking, had clung to a dream of purifying the Church from inside, without separating her from the main body in Europe. But the Council of Trent (1545–1563), upon which men who inclined to this method of reform had built so many bright hopes, proved that the idea of a united Christendom was only an evanescent dream. The formularies issued by the Council made it evident that no compromise was possible, and henceforward it was plain that nothing but entire separation could solve the difficult problem. Nevertheless there were still many in the country who shrank from so strong an innovation, not so much because they desired to maintain relations with the general Catholic Church as that they possessed a natural hesitation, which shrank from any kind of radical change, fearing what might follow.

This was the position of affairs when Edward entered upon his inheritance. The policy he adopted from the first was strongly in favour of Protestantism, and, child though he was, he displayed such marked intelligence that he had no mean share in the control of the country. Studioius beyond his years, thoughtful, gentle, and with a mind that was naturally of a religious inclination, the keynote of his policy was conscientiousness. Never was son more unlike his father than Edward was unlike Henry VIII. Expediency and supremacy, supremacy and expediency, these had been the two motives which had invariably dictated Henry's actions. But Edward knew nothing of expediency, and he cared very little for supremacy. Conscience was his only guide, and though during his reign he was too young to formulate mature plans, had he lived to govern his country he would have governed on lines which tallied with his ideas of right consistency. He had the mind of a recluse rather than that of a monarch;

the pure ambition of a missionary pioneer rather than the material aspirations of a diplomatist. The absolute position which Henry had won at the cost of so much rigid government soon became weakened under Edward, and a popular reaction took place upon the repeal of the tyrannical statute which Henry had instituted at the close of his reign, to the intent that royal proclamations should have all the force of law. The effect of this repeal was widespread. Men awoke from the lethargy which had held them dumb under Henry's administration. The realisation of the wrongs under which they had been labouring rushed upon them with overwhelming force ; everyone found his tongue, and on all sides rose clamours against the throne. Some were for the Mass ; some were against it ; some called for the old order of things to be restored ; others demanded that the new should be everywhere insisted upon ; some denounced Protestantism because the Church had been robbed to satisfy the greed of rapacious nobles ; others declared that no one had been so rapacious as the monks themselves. In the midst of this general confusion, discontent in the villages and country districts rose to the point of revolt over the enclosing of greens and commons and the general condition of the poor. It was the inevitable swing of the pendulum, following upon the removal of so strong a hand as that of Henry VIII. Under Mary it swung back as far in the other direction, and it was not till Elizabeth mounted the steps of the throne with her firm, imperious tread that the balance was once more restored.

Yet nothing could be more distasteful to the earnest young king, immersed in his own studies and in his plans for furthering education and fostering the Protestant religion, than the strife which was raging in his realm. Could he have had his own wish the air would have been

disturbed by no quarrels ; each would have pursued the way his heart pointed out to him as best, and the rainbow of peace would have arched over a nation joined in a worship purified from abuse and artificiality. In the realm depicted in Edward's fancy, conscientiousness was the motive of work, and the advancement of knowledge the aim of all men. But such a happy state of things could by no means come about easily when every man in the country had his own views, which he loudly proclaimed with a persistence that effectually prevented any from obtaining a hearing. Within the chamber of the young sovereign was quietness ; without was excitement, turbulence and the clamour of voices. Meanwhile Protestantism was in danger of being rent into shreds by the very ardour of its adherents, when the health of Edward, which had always been delicate, broke down. Thus, scarcely six years after his accession, he died, and the crown passed into the hands of his half-sister Mary, who as ardently favoured the old régime as Edward had supported the new.

## MARY

*"While I ? I sat alone and watched ;  
My lot in life to live alone  
In mine own world of interests,  
Much felt but little shown."*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

MARY, the daughter of Henry VIII. and Catharine of Arragon, ascended the throne in 1553 amid the burst of popular enthusiasm which followed upon the overthrow of Northumberland's plot. The feeling that justice had been asserted provoked in the hearts of the nation generally a sensation of genial satisfaction, and for the time being all dissatisfaction was lost in a flood of loyalty. The fact that Mary was the daughter of Henry VIII. invested the throne with an impression of stability which was necessary for the progress of commerce and learning. Edward VI. had been too young at his accession to bring with him any real sense of the Tudor supremacy which had been wielded by Henry VIII. ; but in the case of Mary it was different. She was thirty-seven years of age, and even as a princess her character had exhibited not a little of the imperious decision which had marked the personality of her father. Nevertheless, if Mary had something of the nature of Henry VIII. she had also many qualities which were alien to him. She had none of his sagacity, none of his far-sightedness. The caprice which had distinguished Henry's actions in regard to the personal pleasures of life had never been allowed to interfere with his policy of government.

Mary, on the other hand, leaned always in the direction of personal feeling, and she was quite ready to let inclination outweigh the larger issues of policy. Her actions were seldom submitted to the test of expediency, which, indeed, she rarely considered save when it happened to coincide with the desires of her impulsive temperament. Did she dislike anyone, then she never ceased till she had exacted the vengeance which her hate prompted her to demand ; did she wish for a thing, then she desired it so madly that she never rested till she had it in her possession ; did she centre her affections on anyone, then she yielded to an extravagance of emotions ; did she bemoan a disappointment, then she did so with a vehemence that threw her into a turmoil of grief. Thus she hated Lady Jane Grey and never rested till she had found an opportunity of putting her to death ; she desired the restoration of the Catholic faith, and no consideration for the policy of her father, or the wishes of her subjects, could hinder her from rushing headlong into a reconciliation with Rome. She set her heart upon marrying Philip of Spain, and neither persuasion nor remonstrances held her back from carrying her plan to fulfilment. Calais was lost, and in the violence of her grief she protested that the word would be found engraven on her heart. Such was her tempestuous personality ; such her indiscretion. She was, in fact, the embodiment of extremes, and though in name she represented the Tudor dynasty, the majority of her methods were totally unlike those which had been so carefully inaugurated by her father, Henry VIII.

The satisfaction which had dominated her subjects at the first news of her accession soon began to fade away. For this there were two principal reasons, her avowed intention of putting an end to the Protestant form of worship ; and secondly, her persistent encouragement of

the suit of Philip of Spain. Statesmen who understood the temper of the nation earnestly besought the infatuated queen to reject the thought of a marriage which would be so entirely distasteful to her subjects. One after another the courtiers and nobles ventured to point out the disastrous effect it would have upon her popularity, but to one and all the queen turned a deaf ear. She had set her heart on the union, and she was determined at all costs to carry it through. Meanwhile the news of her intention was received by the country with open expressions of dislike. Under Henry VIII. England had been bound to Spain by treaties and by marriage ; but when it came to the question of seeing a Spanish prince consorting with an English queen, the people flung the idea from them with vehemence. In imagination they saw English coffers being drained to feed an alien exchequer ; they saw English soldiers perishing in wars prosecuted by a foreign ruler for the gratification of his own ends ; they saw those who desired the Protestant religion persecuted by an intolerant queen, whose fanaticism was supported by a king ardently upholding the Catholic faith ; they saw themselves reduced to the lowest state of oppression beneath the heel of a Spaniard. “Never, never,” they muttered grimly as they prepared themselves for revolt.

Three rebellions expressed the strength of the general feeling abroad. Of these the one led by Sir Thomas Wyatt in the year 1554 was of the greatest significance. Under his able leadership the men of Kent marched on London and seized the ships lying in the Thames. Had they been able to press on farther, before Mary had had time to take action, they might have gained the city and overthrown the queen. As it was, their plans were frustrated by the splendid intrepidity which the queen displayed. Excited by the urgency of the moment, her Tudor courage

rose to its height ; and galloping on horseback to the Guildhall, she called on the citizens to prove their loyalty and save the city from the impudent rebels. Her courage and the force of her strong personality stirred the people to prompt action, and the bridges were secured. Wyatt and his men, thus cut off from entering by the east, pressed farther up the river, intending to invade the town from the west. But their fate had already been sealed by Mary's bravery, and next morning they suffered defeat at Temple Bar. Wyatt was captured, and the sentence of death passed upon him. No thought of the patriotism which had been the real motive of the insurrection roused the least mercy in the heart of the queen. Regardless of the fact that it was her own persistence in an action, utterly unpalatable to her subjects everywhere, which had brought matters to such a critical juncture, she not only assigned Wyatt and his chief supporters to the block but she wreaked her vengeance on the people of Kent. Hastily-constructed gallows in many parts of the country showed how pitiless she was in her punishment of the insurgents ; how determined to carry through with a high hand the marriage on which her heart was set. Then, as if determined to make it evident once and for all that, in spite of every obstacle, she would follow out her own wishes, she seized the opportunity of the recent disturbances to prosecute those who had fallen under her suspicion, whether by reason of State crimes, or on the ground of religious principle. The old sentence was revived against Lady Jane Grey, who up to now had been detained in prison, and she was put into the hands of the executioner. Her father and her husband suffered a similar fate; while the Princess Elizabeth, who was suspected of having a share in the plot, was shut up in the Tower. Having therefore prepared the way for her nuptials, Mary carried out her

desire and married Philip. Thus a foreign and strongly Catholic prince became the husband of England's queen, who was herself more acquainted with foreign ideas than with the point of view held by her subjects, and whose zeal for the restoration of the Roman faith was as great as that shown by Philip. Thoughtful Englishmen, who watched affairs at court and understood the feeling abroad in the nation, might well pause in fear as they saw the direction which the self-willed sovereign was taking. The Reformation had progressed too far for a reaction to occur without some violent eruption ; this much was plain to any observer with a knowledge of recent events. But few suspected how violent that eruption would be, nor how many men would protest by the sacrifice of their lives against the fanatical insistence of Mary's policy of allying with Spain and persecuting the Church. In this respect Mary exhibited a spirit like that of Henry ; for she would brook no interference from whatever quarter it might come. Nevertheless there was this wide difference between the policy she pursued and the one which Henry had carried out, that while Henry had pointed the helm in the direction he personally desired, he had at the same time kept a vigilant watch on the future of the throne. Mary's eyes were fixed only on the present, and in rousing the people by her tyranny she gave very little thought to the grave jeopardy into which she was plunging the crown. The motive which lay at the bottom of her action had in it no thought of any advancement either of herself or of her position as queen,—it was merely desire to have Philip as her husband, and determination to glorify the religion to which she personally inclined.

Expediency had dictated Henry's policy towards the Church, but here Mary was moved by genuine religious

fervour. Her education had strengthened her devotion to the Roman Church ; while the cruelty which Henry had shown to Catharine, in the matter of the divorce, had excited in her daughter a feeling of revulsion against Henry and Protestantism and drawn her into closer relationship with her cousin, the Emperor Charles, the acknowledged head of the Catholic party. As a girl she had brooded over the wrongs of her mother ; scene after scene in the story had risen up in her imagination till she burned with fury against those who had occasioned her parent and herself such a wrong. Her view of life became distorted, and she looked upon everyone through the spectacles of religious prejudice. Like all the Tudors she could never comprehend the larger, more magnanimous view of allowing to each man liberty of conscience ; and like all the Tudors she was bent upon getting her own way. But unlike the two greatest sovereigns of the dynasty, Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, she did not know how to combine policy with desire ; how to obtain her own way and at the same time promote the stability of the Crown. With a ferocity that contrasted ill with her sex, she sent to the stake no less than two hundred and eighty-six victims in less than four years. A sovereign with a calmer, more judicious mind, would have reflected that by this excessive and ruthless persecution, she would do little more than set in motion an avalanche of antagonistic feeling, little likely to be favourable to the Catholic cause in the long run. But Mary's intensity blinded her to any considerations of this kind ; her zeal outran her wisdom ; and her partiality swallowed up her discretion. Yet the more determined her persecution, the brighter burned the flame of Protestantism, fed by the lives of men of such conviction that they suffered gladly at the stake. No surer way could

have been found for establishing the Protestant religion firmly in England, than the blind and wanton policy which the wilful queen pursued. If England was being robbed of some of the most stalwart and courageous of her citizens, there was arising from the ashes of the martyrs a new spirit of determination, which spread abroad through the country and exercised a permanent and strengthening effect upon the national character. Men who watched the death agonies of so brave a heart as Rowland Taylor, or Latimer, came away silent and brooding. They had looked upon the triumph of courage lit up by the glow of faith, and the scene was not likely to fade from their memory.

But it was not only in London, and among eye-witnesses, that the influence of the martyr was felt. By-and-by the news filtered through to the tiny villages and hamlets, and here again men were silent as they pondered in their hearts what these things might mean. Courage grew in tensity and strength. Throughout the country there ran a live thread of sympathy. Everywhere men stretched out their hands to touch it; and so the magnetism passed from one to another, till the country was united by a thread so slight that it was almost invisible, yet of such real and effective strength that nothing could snap this link between the living and the dead.

Feverishly aware of the futility of her endeavour to break the conviction of her people, Mary was restless and unhappy from other causes. Her marriage with Philip had proved disastrous. Her husband had left her in 1555, and no entreaties on her part could bring him back to her side. Two years later he returned, but from motives of policy rather than affection ; and after wringing from her a consent to aid in the war upon France, he departed to carry on the campaign, which from the English

standpoint was utterly futile and resulted in the loss of Calais.

Moreover, relations between Mary and the Pope had become strained, since the English queen had refused to send Cardinal Pole to Rome to answer a charge of heresy ; and although determined at all costs to protect the Cardinal, who had been persistently her friend and faithful supporter, Mary chafed at the change in the Pope's attitude towards her. Bitterly she reviewed her life ; her unhappy girlhood ; the spasm of delight with which her accession had been greeted ; her hasty and unfortunate marriage with Philip ; the glow of her own enthusiasm for the Romish Church ; the signal failure of her hopes, in spite of persecution unto death ; the hatred for herself awakened in the hearts of her subjects ; the loss of Calais. Although only in early middle life, she was utterly desolate. Cardinal Pole was the only one to whom she could turn for sympathy. Lonely, worn-out, sad-hearted, racked by a terrible disease, and embittered by the frustration of every plan dear to her heart, she died in 1558, leaving behind her a memory of such tyranny that few saw anything in her character save cruelty and revenge.

## ELIZABETH

*"A daughter of the gods."*

TENNYSON

A STRANGER in the city of London on the day of Elizabeth's coronation could easily have told that some great and joyful event was being celebrated, so gay was the city with ribbons and flowers, so smiling and full of pride were the faces of the citizens. Even those who, busy on urgent affairs, hurriedly elbowed their way through the streets, bore with them a look of contentment, as if they had suddenly discovered the solution to a difficult problem. Very early in the day, before the morning had fully dawned, little knots of people had clustered together at the street corners and in the doorways of shops. All these comers were discussing but one event—the coronation which was about to take place ; all bore in their eyes that look of satisfaction which marked the face of even the casual passer-by. Two months had gone since Mary's death, and now, at length, Elizabeth was to be crowned.

As the cold January day wore on and the light of the winter's sun began to warm the city, the numbers of people in the street grew rapidly greater, till at last there had gathered dense crowds, swaying now this way and now that, in their anxiety to see everything that was going on.

Five splendid pageants had been prepared for her Majesty's delectation on her passage through the city from the Tower to Westminster. These were stationed at judicious distances from one another, and as the queen

came to each in turn, her chariot was drawn up so that she might gaze upon the tableaux and listen to the orations, which had been prepared in her honour. In this she showed herself so gracious that she won the hearts of all who watched her progress, so that one who looked on wrote of the occasion : “ In all her Passage, she did not only show her most gracious love towards the people in general, but also privately, if the baser personages had either offered Her Grace any flowers or such like, as a signification of their good will ; or moved to her any suit, she most gently (to the common rejoicing of all lookers on, and private comforts of the party) stayed her chariot and heard their requests. So that if a man should say well, he could not better term the City of London that time, than a Stage wherein showed the wonderful Spectacle of a noble hearted Princess towards her most loving people ; and the people’s exceeding comforts in beholding so worthy a Sovereign and hearing so princelike a voice.”

Then when the queen reached Temple Bar, where the last pageant was stationed, she turned and said : “ Be ye well assured I will stand your good queen ” ; and so amid the noise of guns and the shouts of the people she entered Westminster.

Thus passed the day which brought with it new hope to a people jaded with the turmoil that had accompanied the rule of Mary. In Elizabeth, they saw a princess who had acted with admirable caution and diplomacy in the difficult position which she had held during her half-sister’s supremacy ; and therefore they felt they were justified in expecting her to prove herself a queen, under whom the country would regain the order and stability which were the desire of everyone. As for the queen herself, her heart was light as she took her place in the seat which her father had occupied ; and with the extra-

ordinary self-confidence which to the end distinguished her actions, she bent herself to the task of government. It was no easy undertaking, and none knew this better than she. Yet the very fact of its difficulty stimulated her energies ; and when the tangled skein was put into her hands, it was with a sense of genuine pleasure that she turned to unravel the knots. About one thing she was quite determined ; the knots *should* be disentangled : after which no hand but hers should have any share in controlling the threads again.

Her ideas in regard to the policy she would pursue had long ago been settled. “ I will do as my father did,” she remarked to her ministers, and the remark at once inspired confidence among those who heard it. The decisiveness of this short utterance seemed to indicate that not only had she a policy, but that she meant to show herself judicious in her method of carrying it out. She would inaugurate no new system, but strive to restore the old ; would incline in the direction likely to advance the welfare of the country, rather than follow out plans inspired by mere personal inclination. No wonder that her subjects looked upon her with an admiration that amounted almost to idolatry, for they saw in her the revival of order, and with it the increase of prosperity in their homes ; the revival of freedom of worship, and with it the disappearance of persecution and tyranny ; the re-establishment of a policy of independence abroad, and with it the development of trade and the advancement of the Crown.

But those who credited the queen with warm feelings and religious enthusiasm were mistaken in her character. Throughout her reign she showed herself to be entirely without deeper emotions. She was guided wholly by questions of statesmanship, and in no instance did she act

upon impulse. From her father she had inherited political wisdom, and from him, too, came the determination that at all costs the Crown should be stable. Other motives went for very little with her. The fervour which Edward VI. had exhibited towards Protestantism, and the equal zeal with which Mary had forwarded the cause of Rome, melted before Elizabeth's calm scrutiny. In the Church, as in the State, she set herself deliberately to restore the *via media*, which had been pursued so successfully by Henry VIII.

Determined as she was to restore the balance, she found it no easy task. For under Edward it had pressed heavily to one side, and under Mary it had been jerked as violently to the other. How could she adjust it without at the same time rousing a faction against her? On the one hand were the opponents of the Reformation, bitterly determined in their opposition; on the other was the voluble, excited crowd of the more ardent reformers, followers of Calvin and Zwingle, who had flocked into the country upon the accession of a sovereign who seemed inclined to favour Protestantism. At one elbow of the queen stood a figure urging strictures upon the more daring innovators in the Church; at the other elbow was an eager pleader against peace with Rome. A monarch with a less judicial mind, or a less self-confident nature, would either have been won over by one or the other, or, worn out by the contention, would have sunk into acquiescence at random.

But Elizabeth's diplomatic temperament carried her triumphantly through the crisis. No personal feelings urged her in this direction or that. She was determined to maintain independence from Rome, but otherwise she was little affected by the religious revolution which was convulsing the whole of Europe. Her love for colour and

beauty led her to prefer an ornate service ; but being aware that the wishes of her people lay strongly in the direction of simplicity, she bowed to the movement of the times. Nevertheless she had no intention of letting any but herself control the Church. Only the year after her accession, an Act of Uniformity was passed by which the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. was made the only lawful form of Church service ; while the Act of Supremacy, which was enacted at the same time, renounced the jurisdiction of the Pope and also emphasised the control of the English monarch, as supreme “in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal.”

Little by little the ever-growing party of Protestantism pressed upon the reluctant queen. Thus, though she showed no small severity in dealing with Puritans, who would not confess her supremacy, and even sent to the gallows John Penry, a Welshman, who by means of the Martin Marprelate Tracts had denounced the episcopal system, she was always careful to maintain her position as the friend of Protestantism. From political motives she helped the Huguenots against Catharine de Medici. She hoped that by interfering in French affairs she would effectually divert the French from sending help to Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Catholics in Scotland, and in this way weaken the possibility of revolt in favour of putting Mary on the English throne. The action of the Huguenots in 1563, when they put Havre into the hands of the English queen in return for some meagre help on her part, forced her into a position of open support of the Protestant cause, and within the next ten years she was driven by the developments in France and Spain to take up the position of leader of the Protestant forces. She was further forced by the terrible and ruthless massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, in 1572 ; the rise of Henry of Navarre

as the Protestant champion of the French ; the revolt of the Netherland provinces against Spain ; and their foundation as a Republic under the Protestant prince, William the Silent, to determine the position it would be most politic for her to adopt, whether that of supporting the Protestant rebels in France and the Netherlands, or of joining herself to the Catholic forces headed by Spain.

The Protestants of both France and Holland naturally looked for help from the sovereign who had maintained an open division with Rome ; and in England the feeling ran strongly in favour of giving them aid. English volunteers had long been helping in the struggle ; English money had been willingly sent for the same cause, and now that the crisis was at its height the people turned to the queen, for whom they had so strong an admiration, expecting to see her announce herself boldly as the Head of the Protestant Forces of Europe. In the council chamber of the palace the same expectation was rife, and more than one of the wisest and best of Elizabeth's statesmen begged her to take definite action. Never had the queen found herself so embarrassed. By putting herself openly at the head of the revolting party, she would be taking up a definite position, which she saw might be used by the more ardent of the Protestants at home to redouble their cries for greater reform. Moreover it might involve the country in war with Spain, and war with its extremes was as abhorrent to this upholder of the *via media* as ever it had been to the timid and parsimonious Henry VII. In the privacy of her chamber the queen knitted her brows and dwelt gloomily upon the situation. Her frown deepened as she went over the position in her mind. She saw herself forced into active support of the Protestant party abroad ; embroiled in warfare ; harassed at home by the increasing demands of the growing Calvinist body ; her

exchequer impoverished ; the straight path, along which she had so far borne the sceptre of sovereignty, twisted from its course into the intricate maze of that political and religious revolution through which every European country was now trying to thread its way. With a shrug of her shoulders, Elizabeth resolved to resort to her usual method of subterfuge and delay. Thus while she was still openly hesitating as to the course she would pursue, she was in secret sending help to the rebels.

Those who stood nearest to her at court were neither surprised nor deceived by her action. They understood by now that the policy of the queen was always founded upon hesitation ; that her delays and excuses were only made to gain time, so that if possible matters might adjust themselves naturally, and so prevent her from the necessity of taking an openly decisive position.

Thus matters were hanging in the balance. Philip of Spain, and Elizabeth of England, were watching each other with the cunning and intensity of animals about to spring upon their prey ; though each was strenuously endeavouring to prevent the initiative being taken by the other. Matters were precipitated by the rash conduct of Drake towards the Spanish colonists, when he was on his wonderful voyage round the world. As a result the Armada set sail, with woeful consequences for Spain.

But while Philip and Elizabeth were still engrossed in watching the movements of each other; while the fair sails of the Armada were still furled in Spanish harbours; while peace was still ostensibly unbroken; Elizabeth was harassed by a fresh danger, and for once she lost some of her self-control. This was caused by the crafty undermining of her authority in favour of Mary, Queen of Scotland, which was taking place in England through the endeavours of foreign emissaries. The intensity of the struggle of the

Reformation under Henry VIII., while it had awakened a strong reaction against Rome, had also had the effect of stirring up the enthusiasm of those who upheld the Catholic faith. Many, who had been only sluggish supporters of the Pope, were now pushed by the excitement of the struggle into a keener attitude. Activity was not confined to one side only, and so there sprang up among the Catholics more than one order of priests intent upon restoring the Catholic faith. Of these the most famous was the Order of Jesus, founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1540. Since then the order had developed with extraordinary rapidity, and now in 1580, two Jesuistic priests came over to England, with the purpose of stirring up sedition against Elizabeth, and of putting Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne, which in the eyes of Rome was unlawfully held by Elizabeth. Mary was at this time a prisoner in England. In 1568 she had thrown herself on the protection of Elizabeth, who had welcomed her with scant pleasure. It was a distinct difficulty for her to have Mary in England, and although she replied by detaining the Scottish queen as a prisoner, yet even so, as long as Mary lived, Elizabeth was in danger of rebellions and plots against her throne. At the news of this fresh and insidious attempt on the part of Spain she was almost frantic in her anxiety to cement her position with France. Thus, distasteful as she found the idea of marriage, and although she was by now forty-two, she agreed to accept as a suitor Francis, Duke of Anjou, a man twenty-seven years of age and in no way suited to marry a woman of Elizabeth's imperious and powerful character.

In the end the plan met with the same fate which had ended all the other courtships of Elizabeth, and nothing resulted from the proposal except that the English queen gained a little time to help her in forming her policy against

Spain. The increasing strength of the conspiracies which broke out round the imprisoned Queen of Scots, at last made Elizabeth consent to the execution of her rival. When the death warrant was ready for her signature, the English queen sat long toying with her pen, unable to bring herself to write the fatal word. But it was not pity that moved her heart, nor reluctance at taking the life of another. It was the fear of what the consequences might be to herself, the dread of the result it might produce in the future. Her subjects were openly glad at the sentence. With heartless levity they lighted bonfires and rung bells at the news of the decision, but Elizabeth knew quite well that their delight might very easily turn later to odium. She desired the death of Mary, but she did not desire to bear the blame of it. Even after she had filled her pen and hastily written her name, she stooped to such meanness that she sent word to Sir Amyas Paulet, who had the custody of Mary, begging him to put her away privately by poison, and thus exempt the English sovereign from being publicly responsible for the act. Her suggestion was courageously rejected, and Elizabeth was driven into a public position of acquiescence in the execution. Elizabeth's tactics at this time show her in her worst light. They betray in her that depth of cowardice which often underlies the outwardly bold actions of those who, when faced with moral questions, shrink from avowing openly that which they do not hesitate to bring about by secret treachery of the vilest sort. As long as Mary lived she not only endangered Elizabeth, but she placed the English Crown in jeopardy from a foreign power. Her execution solved a very difficult political problem, but Elizabeth's share in it does not help to enhance the glory which surrounds the name of this great sovereign.

Meanwhile in the direction of Spain the sky was getting

more and more overcast, and the year 1588 saw the great ships of the Armada bear majestically upon England. Three months passed by, months of hard fighting and fierce winds, and of all the magnificent ships which had sailed from Lisbon in such pride, only one half, and these tattered and damaged beyond recognition, crept again into harbour in Spain.

Meanwhile in England the defeat of Spain's proud fleet had not only secured for England a position of unassailable independence in the eyes of the world generally, but it had provoked a burst of national feeling, which drew the queen and her people into a still closer relationship, and cemented the bond between the Crown and the nation. In every nook of the land men went about with the proud realisation of their nationality openly expressed in their bearing. Never before had the identity of the nation as such loomed in the imagination of the race with the vividness that it now reached. Patriotism attained giant growth at a bound, and Elizabeth as queen of it all was exalted in the eyes of her subjects to a lofty and dizzy height of greatness. It seemed as if this were the moment for which the nation had been labouring for years. Genius burst into flower, and the desire to know more of far-off lands burned like madness in the hearts of the ardent ; literature found eager disciples ; and even those who could neither adventure themselves upon long voyages, nor express themselves in fine words, went about their ordinary tasks with more zest. For a moment the country, so long torn by faction, glowed with the genial feeling of unity.

Nevertheless peace with Spain was by no means effected. The greater the feeling of patriotism on the part of England, the more deadly grew her animosity to the foreign power that would have overthrown the English succession. Till the death of Elizabeth the war was waged inter-

mittently, but after the defeat of the Spaniards at Cadiz there was little spirit shown on either side. For the present Spain was crippled beyond hope of retort.

By this time Elizabeth was nearly fifty-six years old, yet her vigour was as great as ever, and her determination to manipulate the policy of the country after her own fashion no less firm than before. With something like dismay, therefore, she realised that this sudden and new realisation of national power had produced in her Parliament the effect of an independence, as unmistakable as it was unpalatable to the high-handed sovereign. As a rule she had summoned Parliament as seldom as possible ; for she knew that collisions between herself and her Commons would be inevitable, and therefore she warily withheld from plunging into unnecessary disputes. But after 1588, despite her careful plans for a packed House, she found her task of controlling her ministers of no slight difficulty, and only the extreme tact which always distinguished her policy saved her from open disaster. But at the moment of a crisis Elizabeth would always give way when it was the inevitable course, and she showed such rare skill in her action at these times that her yielding increased her popularity. Haughty when it was the moment for imperious direction, no one could give way with more grace, no one could estimate more quickly, or more accurately, the real state of feeling among the people. A notable instance of this kind was her withdrawal of monopolies in 1601, at the instance of the Parliament. Turning to the Commons, she thanked them and remarked : "Had I not received knowledge from you I might have fallen into the lap of an error only for want of true information." To the end of her long reign she retained the devotion of her ministers, and the affection and

loyalty of her subjects. Her popularity lasted with a tenacity that is the more extraordinary in the face of the motives of policy upon which she always based her conduct. She had no sympathy in her nature ; no affection. She indulged openly in falsehood when it suited her purpose ; and she thought it no shame to court flattery and encourage flirtations. Her vanity was almost incredible, and towards the end of her rule, when age had robbed her of comeliness, she still persisted in an extravagant affectation of youth, which was as pitiful as it was degrading. Yet even in these minor pretences she played her part with such spirit, that much which was really counterfeit passed as true, and the energy with which she cheated herself into a belief in her own attractiveness softened the effect of an effort that would otherwise have roused disgust. Wonder at her spirit, admiration for her ability, an honest belief in the wisdom of her policy, and an instinctive loyalty to the throne, outweighed any feelings of disapprobation awakened by the display of some of her ignoble qualities. She was a monarch through whom England was saved from confusion at a moment when disaster seemed about to overwhelm her, and the grateful service and extreme admiration of her subjects seemed only a natural and small return for the benefits which her judicious rule had bestowed upon them. So, when the news came that she was mortally ill, it was received with the keenest consternation.

Elizabeth exhibited her old, indomitable courage even then. She would not allow of the gravity of her condition, nor abate her endeavours to conform to her usual habits till she was forced to yield by bodily weakness. She rejected every proposal that she should remain in bed, and insisted upon rising and being placed on cushions in one of her private rooms.

In explanation of this conduct it is said that she was suffering from extreme fear of death ; that she who had enjoyed life with such zest now shrank from the last ordeal. But it is a theory which fits ill with the general behaviour of Elizabeth. May it not have been that it was only another phase of her inveterate habit of delay ? She knew that she must die, but she would dally for a while even with Death himself. In problems of conduct, matters of state and affairs of the heart she had always acted thus. Maybe she thought to keep Death at bay, and coquet with him while she plucked up her courage ; maybe it was only an unconscious exhibition of a passion strong even in the last extremity.

One of her favourites, Sir Robert Carey, afterwards Earl of Monmouth, has left an account of her condition at this time : “ I found her in one of her withdrawing chambers, sitting low upon cushions. She called me to her. I kissed her hand and told her it was my chiefest happiness to see her in safety and health which I wished might long continue. She took me by the hand and wrung it hard ; and said, ‘ No, Robin, I am not well,’ and then discoursed with me of her indisposition, and that her heart had been sad and heavy for ten or twelve days ; and in her discourse she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs. . . . I was grieved, at the first, to see her in this plight ; for in all my lifetime, I never knew her fetch a sigh but when the Queen of Scots was beheaded. Then (in 1587) upon my knowledge, she shed many tears and sighs ; manifesting her innocence that she never gave consent to the death of that Queen. . . . From that day forwards she grew worse and worse. She remained upon her cushions four days and nights at the least. All about her could not persuade her, either to take any sustenance or to go to bed.”

Nevertheless, even in the midst of such weakness, the news that her ministers were distractedly considering the question of her successor, roused the imperious queen to energetic remonstrance. Two names were mentioned as candidates, the first being that of James of Scotland, the son of Mary and Darnley ; the second, Edward Seymour, Lord Beauchamp, the son of the sister of Lady Jane Grey. It was decided to refer these to the queen herself, and with this purpose the ministers made their way to her presence. The room in which the great sovereign lay dying was deep in shadows as the statesmen approached. Elizabeth was not laying down her sceptre without a struggle ; power was fast slipping from her fingers, but her clutch on her courage never failed her. The name of James was suggested to her as that of one who should fill her place. She made no reply. But at the sound of Beauchamp's name a spark of her old fury tore its way through her lips as she cried : “ I will have no rascal's son in my seat, but one worthy to be a king.”

The next day she died. Her death contrasted strangely with that of her half-sister Mary. The one passed away overwhelmed by a sense of the failure of her rule ; the other bore with her the consciousness of a brilliant reign, crowned by a triumph which was the outcome of a definite and consistent policy, masterfully wielded. In both cases the queens were themselves responsible for their isolation. With Elizabeth it was deliberately sought for as an adjunct of the part she had determined to play. With Mary it was the undesired result of a tyranny no one could brook. Both must at times have endured the bitterness of loneliness, though the courage of Elizabeth held her back from confessing to such an emotion.

When the news of Elizabeth's death was made public, the people expressed an extravagant grief. No eulogy

was too great for her; no lamentation too profuse: “Alas,” cried Camden, “how inconsiderable is her monument in comparison of the noble qualities of so heroical a lady! She herself is her own monument and a more magnificent and sumptuous one than any other. For let these noble actions recommend her to the praise and admiration of posterity: Religion reformed, peace established, money reduced to its true value, a most compleat fleet built, our naval glory restored, rebellion suppressed, England for forty-three years together most prudently governed, enriched, and strengthened, Scotland rescued from the French, France itself relieved, the Netherlands supported, Spain and Ireland quieted, and the whole world twice sailed round.”

## LADY JANE GREY

*"If my faults deserve punishment, my youth, at least, and my imprudence were worthy of excuse. God and posterity will show me favour."*

DIARY OF LADY JANE GREY

**B**ETWEEN the frail figure of the young, scholarly King Edward and the vivid, fanatical personality of Mary stands a pathetic shadow, girlish in outline, the figure of the hapless Lady Jane Grey. But for ambition her name would probably never have been known in history. It was the high passions of her father which flung her into the fierce glare of sovereignty ; for herself she would willingly have played no such public part.

Thrown perforce into this strong relief, she forms a wistful and moving picture. She was as truly a victim of the religious strife of the day as any martyr who suffered at the stake. For the idea of putting forward her claim to the throne, sprang first of all from the knowledge that the pronounced Catholic tendencies of the Princess Mary would rouse against her a vigorous faction, when the moment of her accession should arrive. Had there not been such a strong probability of disaffection, it is doubtful whether the question of Lady Jane's claim would ever have been mooted. The opportunity for such a scheme could only have been occasioned at a time of great unrest and disaffection. And indeed, at the moment, there seemed enough signs of an approaching upheaval to warrant the assertion of a rival claim. For it was obvious that the accession of Mary could mean nothing less than persecu-

tion for the Protestants, who might therefore be persuaded into supporting a claim which in itself could not boast of even a semblance of justice. Under no other circumstances would there have been any chance for such insignificant pretensions to find even a temporary support.

The imperious Duke of Northumberland, who had been the one to concoct the plan, was well aware of the slender nature of the claim, and therefore before carrying his plan into effect he sought to make everything doubly sure. To this end he consulted the Duke of Suffolk, laying before him a suggestion by which Lady Jane Grey, Suffolk's daughter, should be married to Lord Guildford Dudley, Northumberland's son, after which, upon the death of Edward, Lady Jane's accession was to be instantly proclaimed. The crown would thus pass to the young couple and so leave the real power in the hands of the two dukes. No sooner did Suffolk hear of the scheme than his ambition was fired. In imagination he already saw himself wielding the power of a king in his daughter's name, and not only did he give his consent to the scheme, but he showed himself full of eagerness to carry it to rapid realisation. Together these two powerful men, well versed in matters of statecraft and diplomacy, discussed their discreditable plan. Every possible point of objection was discussed, and every fear of disaffection forestalled. To make certain the success of their intention, Edward, who was yet alive, was induced to sign a document declaring that in regard to the succession of Mary and Elizabeth the will of Henry VIII. was null and void, and appointing instead that the crown should go to Lady Jane Grey, upon the strength of her descent from Henry VII. through her mother, Frances, who was the granddaughter of the first Tudor monarch. As for Lady Jane herself, she was deeply attached to her young husband, Dudley, and

anxious to do all that he desired of her. It was with no great difficulty, therefore, that she was persuaded to believe in her right to succeed, and though, with a modesty that always characterised whatever she did, she shrank from pushing her claim in the face of that of the daughter of Henry VIII., she was quite ready to acquiesce in any plan that her father and her father-in-law might assure her was the best for her to adopt.

Heedless of everything save his own advancement, Northumberland brushed aside without a second thought, the idea that in the event of the failure of the plot any danger might threaten his son's bride. Power, greater than any he had ever dreamed of possessing, now seemed to be dangling just within his grasp ; and in his anxiety to seize it, he leaned forward eagerly, with never a reflection that in so doing he must needs crush whatever stood in his way. Thus it happened that the death of Edward was followed by an instant proclamation of the accession of Lady Jane, and under the menacing frown of the two powerful dukes, the judges and the members of the council duly acquiesced. Upon their response, a spasm of gratified ambition stirred Northumberland's heart. The fruit was plucked ; it was now his to enjoy. Yet had he but known it, his moment of triumph was destined to be so short that it would be gone ere he had had time to experience its sweetness.

The news of Lady Jane's accession spread like wildfire through the country. In every town and village men dropped their work and stood idle while they discussed what this new step might mean. They knew little or nothing of Lady Jane herself, but they lost no time in agreeing that her claim to the throne was flimsy and preposterous. The right of Mary was too plain ; Edward VI. could never have had the right to annul what Henry VIII.

had appointed. Moreover, behind the figure of Lady Jane, they saw looming the dreaded shadow of her father-in-law, Northumberland ; and at the thought of what his usurpation of power might mean, their passions broke out on behalf of the daughter of Henry. In the eastern counties particularly, voices were loud in their denunciation of Northumberland, and it was declared openly that Lady Jane Grey was no English sovereign. “God save Queen Mary,” cried one, tossing his cap in the air. It was the signal for a general demonstration. “God save Queen Mary,” replied eager voices everywhere, and so the cry passed on. Meanwhile mere words gave way to actions, and men silently seized their weapons and prepared to set out to maintain the truth of the phrase which was still echoing in the air. The expression of the eastern counties was the expression of the country generally, except in the case of London itself, which held out against Mary and Catholicism. But it needed a stronger claim than Lady Jane Grey’s to carry the day against the whole kingdom. By the side of Mary’s bold personality the timid character of the daughter of Suffolk lacked the power of impressing itself as a force on others. Authority in her hands had the air of having been usurped : in Mary’s, however much she might abuse it, it was at least wielded as a right. Nevertheless the shy demeanour of Lady Jane hid a heart that possessed the tenacity of a martyr, and once having been persuaded that the crown ought to be hers, she was prepared to stand by it at all costs. The noise of the tumult throughout the country did not for the moment affect London, but by-and-by the clamour grew so loud that it could by no means be excluded even from the capital city. Full of alarm Northumberland marched from the town with 10,000 troops, prepared to overthrow the rebels ; but once he was out of the city walls,



Lady Jane Grey

Lucas D'Heere

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and the city atmosphere, he was so affected by the general opinion in favour of Mary that even his proud courage was overwhelmed by despair, and he acknowledged defeat. Nor was his surrender mere acquiescence ; for among those who shouted for Queen Mary his voice rang more loudly than any.

Thus deserted almost before her reign had begun, Lady Jane Grey found herself face to face with a council determined to withdraw the oaths which the tyranny of Northumberland had exacted from them. With faces rigid and determined they assembled and declared the removal of their support. Their disavowal acted as a spur on the courage of the unfortunate girl, dragged from a happy and inconspicuous position to one of such embarrassment and danger. With inimitable stateliness she declared in a few dignified words that since those who should have been her strongest supporters had basely deserted her in her moment of greatest need, she was prepared to abdicate a crown which she herself had never sought. Thus the bubble called into existence by the ambition of the Duke of Northumberland burst into air. Lady Jane Grey had never in any real sense been queen. She had borne a title, it is true, but it had been a mere empty phrase, which had signified nothing save to the two or three who had instigated the plot.

Nevertheless the vengeance which in a few months followed, took a real and terrible shape. Instead of a crown Lady Jane met with the axe of the executioner ; and, innocent herself, she paid with her life the price of Northumberland's ambitious dream. The crowds who flocked to see her execution looked on silently as she stepped to the dreadful block. Her youth, her beauty, her innocence, excited pity amongst all who beheld her, and once her body was bereft of life, those who had most

opposed her accession were amongst the ones who openly lamented her fate. Her personality was too gentle for them to bear any feeling of animus against her, and though they would never have acknowledged her as their sovereign they shrank from the thought of the violent death of one whom Fuller later summed up as possessing “the innocence of childhood, the beautie of youth, the soliditie of middle, the gravitie of old age, and all at eighteen ; the bust of a princess, the learning of a clerk, the life of a saint, yet the death of a malefactor, for her parents’ offences.”

The deed accomplished, ballad makers took up the tale and turned it into popular verse, and so the story, which was told again and again in village inn and country cottage, has been preserved in the rude songs of the time.

*“ This was the lamentation  
That Lady Jane made :  
Saying, for my father’s Proclamation,  
Now must I lose my head.*

*But God that searcheth every heart  
He knoweth I am guiltless,  
Although that now I suffer smart  
Yet, I am not worthy of this.*

*But seeing I’m judged by a law to die,  
And under which I was born,  
Yet I will take it patiently  
Laughing none of them to scorn.*

*The headsman kneeleth on his knee,  
To forgive him her death.  
‘ Friend,’ she said ‘ God forgive thee !  
With all my heart and faith.’*

*Upon the block she laid her head,  
Her death meekly to take,  
‘ In manus tuas,’ then she said,  
And thus her end she did make.”*

## MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

*"I will drink  
Life to the lees ; all times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone."*

TENNYSON

DURING the reign of Henry VIII., when the English monarch was fighting the battle of Religious Reform, Scotland was maintaining the cause of the old faith. The Pope had stretched out a hand of blessing upon the Scottish monarch, James V., and sent him tokens of his goodwill and support ; while two successive Catholic marriages had further cemented the tie. For in 1537 James had married the daughter of Francis I., and upon her death shortly afterwards he had continued the alliance with France by wedding Mary of Guise. The hostility which had always marked the relationships between the king of Scotland and the king of England was thus drawn into acuteness. Henry looked sourly upon a neighbour who could count upon French help against England ; and James, alienated from his nobles by the foreign policy he had pursued, spent his days in uneasy dread of invasion from the powerful and headstrong English sovereign. In 1542 matters came to a crisis in the battle of Solway Moss. The Scots were utterly defeated, and James, miserable at the downfall of his secret elaborate hopes for a Scottish supremacy in England, sank into a low fever from which he shortly died. Six days before his death a little daughter was born to him, who

thus became Queen of Scotland when a mere infant of a week old.

While the royal baby was still helpless in the arms of a nurse, the sovereigns of England and France were both forming plans for her marriage. The ardour betrayed by either was of the keenest. France hoped to gain control over a country which would give easy access into England ; England, on the other hand, hoped that by uniting the English and Scottish crowns, the fear of French invasion would be greatly reduced. Henry offered the hand of Prince Edward ; Francis pushed forward his son, the Dauphin. Meantime things were progressing for England, and her proposal seemed on the verge of being accepted, when at the instance of Cardinal Beaton it was abruptly rejected and Mary became betrothed to the Dauphin. In this way was settled the fate of the baby queen, who was as yet happily unconscious of the schemes which were already surrounding her with their network ; as yet unaware of the up-and-down road her feet would have to tread ; as yet ignorant of the dreadful goal which would mark for her the end of the path of life.

Her childhood was passed at the French court and she thus grew up in surroundings which isolated her as nothing else could have done from the temper of her subjects. She was even unacquainted with the Anglo-Saxon tongue, and looked with aversion upon the Protestant religion. Nothing could have fitted her so ill for the task of governing her country in the future as life among the luxurious and frivolous French nobles. The very atmosphere of France was naturally antagonistic to the traditions of the northern kingdom, and after such a training it was from the first almost hopeless for Mary to try to identify herself with her people.

She was both ambitious and gifted with political ability.

As a mere girl she had worked hard to secure her position in France, and to establish so securely her supremacy as queen that she might venture upon an attack on England. But she found herself retarded by the weakness of her husband, Francis II.; and when upon his death in 1560 the power at the French court fell into the able, unscrupulous hands of Catherine de Medici, the Queen Mother, Mary found herself forced to seek another home. The change was a severe blow to her proud spirit. Her ambitious but pleasure-loving and ardent nature shrank from the idea of life among the austere Scots; her pride revolted from the shrinkage in her fortunes; but her common-sense told her it was the only course to be followed. A woman with less determined courage would scarcely have dared to face the prospect of the cold reception she knew must await her, and the difficulties that would beset her in Scotland. But if she shrank from the experiment, she gave no sign of weakness; in this, as in the later and darker trials of her career, her courage made her triumphant. Nevertheless, in spite of her brave outward bearing her heart was filled with tremors as she landed in her kingdom, on a day when the air was thick with fog, through which faces dimly glowered, full of anything but delight at the appearance of their queen. To the superstitious there was something ominous in the gloom, which on this day in August overcast the sky and moistened the air; it foreshadowed the sorrow and shame which the country should by-and-by suffer from the guilt of an infatuated queen; it foretold the extinction of Mary's power, and portended the depth of the ignominy which in later years should be heaped upon her.

Meanwhile Mary gathered up the reins of government with a skill and an energy which betrayed powers of no mean quality. But she showed little tact in the way in

which she set herself to oppose the wishes of her people. For her own part she was willing to allow those of the reformed faith full liberty in their worship, but for herself she would not yield in the matter of the Mass. The Roman Catholic form of service had been familiar to her all her life, and she was determined that she would not set it aside to please a handful of subjects, with whose views she had nothing in common, and with whom she had been until lately altogether unacquainted. Her action roused dissatisfaction. Knox denounced her practices; ministers remonstrated; and her subjects openly grumbled. But the self-willed queen, intent upon having her own way, paid no heed to any of them. "A clatter about a trifle," she thought in her heart, not understanding the temperament of the Scots, who took in deadly earnest a matter that to herself might be insignificant.

In points of general government she showed herself able and competent, and thus in time she gathered to her side some of those who had been inclined to treat her at first with suspicion and contempt.

During this period England stood like a watch-dog ever on the alert; ready at a moment to assume the defensive. Mary's return was a real danger to Elizabeth, whose right to the crown had never been acknowledged by the Catholics. Mary herself had openly used the Arms of England and asserted her right to the English throne, nor would she on any terms consent to a public renunciation of those claims, however fictitious they might be in reality. Her close neighbourhood to Elizabeth was therefore embarrassing to England generally, and the fear of revolt was seldom far absent. The two queens regarded each other with suspicion and jealousy; each was too conscious of the ability of the other to underrate the power which either held, and though fair words passed between them,

no one was deceived. Mary's ambition was almost as great as that of Elizabeth's, and if she lacked Elizabeth's political tact she could exhibit equal determination and equal dignity, when the question of kingship was involved.

Four years after her return to Scotland Mary married her cousin, Lord Darnley. Her claim to the English throne was thus greatly strengthened, for Darnley was the next heir in succession to both the English and Scottish thrones, and Elizabeth might well experience foreboding when she heard the news. Next year a little son was born, who afterwards became James I. of England.

Thus for the moment everything looked well for Mary. Her people had become reconciled to her ; the country was at peace ; her position in regard to England was stronger than it had ever been before ; and she was the mother of an heir to the crowns of both the rival kingdoms.

But while the sky looked blue and sunny to those who did not glance far ahead, those whose gaze penetrated to the distant horizon saw that it was gloomy with ominous clouds : the sun of Mary's triumph was shining, but the night of her defeat was at hand, and as the sun had shown itself bright almost beyond compare, so the night would prove of deep and impenetrable blackness.

The first movement in the direction of tragedy had already been taken some three months earlier by the murder of Riccio. Jealous of the favourite's hold over the queen, Darnley himself took a share in the plot, and Riccio was murdered one evening as he sat at supper with Mary in Holyrood Palace. It was a terrible moment for the queen. The glow from the tall candles in their silver sconces fell upon the glittering plate and dainty dishes on the royal supper table ; the thick velvet hangings were softened in the shaded light; and the favourite was leaning forward to utter some tender compliment, when the cur-

tains were flung aside and the assassins entered, their eyes fixed in hate upon Riccio. In vain the victim clung to Mary's robe ; he was dragged shrieking into an anteroom, and there met his death by the daggers of his foes. Never did Mary show herself more full of coolness and courage than at the moment of this sudden and dreadful tragedy. Her presence of mind never failed her, and by her self-control she broke up a conspiracy which threatened to prove still more serious. But the picture of that night never faded from her memory. She had never liked Darnley, and now her repugnance deepened into hate. At last she lent her ear to an evil plot, suggested by the Earl of Bothwell, by which her husband's death should be accomplished. Incited by hatred for the murderer of Riccio, and by passion for the bold, reckless nature of Bothwell, Mary actually gave her consent to the infamous scheme, and Darnley's death was secretly carried out. This was less than a year after the birth of Prince James ; yet now the queen was accused of being concerned in the murder of one who had been the husband of herself and the father of her little son. Haughtily Mary protested her innocence in the matter ; but in vain. The evidence against her was too strong for her assertions to be readily believed. Her share in the affair was everywhere discussed and often openly denounced. But the note of disapproval rose to one of horror when it was found that the queen was preparing to wed Bothwell, the chief murderer of her husband, Darnley.

A clamour of indignation, fury, and disgust, rang through the country. Every eye that was turned on Mary showed the light of aversion and contempt, and if lips were silent it was because words could not be found to express the abhorrence which the sovereign's conduct had aroused.

But Mary would never be turned aside from her purpose,

and neither threats, nor aversion, nor any sense of wrong-doing, could hold her from her intention. On the 24th of April she married Bothwell and thus sounded the death knell of her reign in Scotland. Her people rose in revolt ; and the very nobles who had seemed to encourage Bothwell turned hotly upon their queen. Not one could be found to support a sovereign who had openly set aside every consideration except that of her own passion. Baffled on every side, the queen drank to the dregs the bitter cup she had filled for herself. Bothwell fled to the Continent, and Mary herself was imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle and forced to abdicate in favour of her baby son. Imprisonment weighed heavily on her pleasure-loving temperament, and she found small consolation in her thoughts. In desperation at her position she turned to the one who of all others was least likely to show her mercy, and escaping from her confinement in 1568, she reached England to crave Elizabeth's protection.

Her arrival was unwelcome, for though Elizabeth ardently desired Mary's death she dared not exact it without some ostensible cause : on the other hand, as long as Mary remained alive England was subject to the gravest dangers of disaffection and rebellion. Even the clear wits of Elizabeth were for once baffled, and she fell back upon her usual policy of delay, declaring that she would suspend her judgment until the charges against Mary had been investigated.

Thus the deposed and unhappy queen began the imprisonment which lasted till her execution in 1587, and thus did she pay the long and bitter penalty of her passion. Her animosity against Elizabeth meanwhile mounted higher and higher, and she lost no opportunity of secretly stirring up her friends against the English sovereign. The most dangerous of these plots were the Northern Rebellion

of 1570 and the Babington Conspiracy of 1586. The extent and malignancy of the latter led to the demand for Mary's execution. Her letters and papers were suddenly seized, and she herself was led before a commission of thirty-six members. She stoutly denied the charges brought against her, and declared that she had never agreed to any plan either for murdering Elizabeth or for restoring Catholicism, though documents had been found in her room, which, if true, proved her uttermost guilt. Like Elizabeth, Mary never shrank from falsehood when it best suited her purpose: their mutual hatred was well known, and it is difficult to believe that Mary had held herself clear from all incriminating plots. After her trial she was pronounced guilty, and the demand for her execution sent to the queen. At this point Elizabeth's miserable habit of indecision again showed itself. For the peace of the kingdom there were reasons why the sentence should be carried out; but if it was to be done at all, then it should have been done summarily as an act of political necessity. Instead of this Elizabeth summoned a Parliament to share her responsibility. The Commons made the same reply as the Commissioners had done, and the warrant was sent for the queen to sign. Twelve days passed by and still Elizabeth hesitated. At last she signed the document and despatched it; the next day she sent a message for its delay. But it had already passed from the hands of Davison, the Secretary of State, and no one was in the mood to endure this hesitation much longer. Up to the last moment Elizabeth cast about for some means of transferring the responsibility, and no sooner had the fatal deed taken place, on 7th February 1587, than she yielded to the full force of her fury and declared she had never intended it to be carried out. As if to salve her conscience, she wept and sighed and put the whole court into mourn-

ing, and wreaked an undeserved vengeance on those who had carried the deed to its conclusion. In every way she showed herself utterly unworthy. For she was not concerned with pity for Mary's fate ; in her heart she was glad that her rival was at last removed from her path ; it was only that she disliked bearing the odium of the deed.

As for Mary, the courageous and dignified way in which she met her death kindled an admiration which has not yet become extinguished. "Tell my son," she said, "I have done nothing prejudicial to the dignity of his crown." The words were false, but the manner in which they were said conveyed an air of sincerity. In a moment she was exalted by her misfortunes to a height of splendour, and her scaffold became her glory. She had known the whimsies of fortune ; she had tasted much of both the sweet and the bitter of existence ; all her life she had had to fight to maintain her position. As a child she had been well versed in diplomacy and statecraft. She had never been taught the value of the nobler issues of life ; she had never known how to keep passion in check. From her cradle she had had to thread her way through a maze of intrigue, till she had become so accustomed to tortuous passages that the straighter, simpler road seemed to her the more difficult. But at the moment of her death, her beauty, her courage, her queenly bearing, the pathos of her story, roused in the onlookers a sense of shame at the manner and cause of her execution.

Thus died the ill-fated Queen of Scots, in the year 1587, at the age of forty-five. Disastrous as her life had been, in death she found her triumph.

## Phase II—The Church

### THOMAS WOLSEY

*“ Within one year three bishoprics I had,  
And in small space a Cardinal I was made ;  
With long red robes rich Wolsey then was clad,  
I walked in sun when others sate in shade ;  
I went abroad, with such a train of trade  
With crosses borne before me where I past,  
That man was thought to be some god at last.  
  
Full many a year the world looked for my fall,  
And when I fell I made as great a crack  
As doth an oak, a mighty tottering wall,  
That whirling wind doth bring to ruin and wrack ;  
Now babbling world will talk behind my back,  
A thousand things to my reproach and shame,  
So will it too of others do the same.”*

THOMAS CHURCHYARD

**I**N close attendance upon Henry VIII. were to be seen the figures of two statesmen of extraordinary ability and renown, Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell. The first of these played his part during the opening years of the reign ; in the latter half the second worked out the destructive policy dictated by his harsh genius. Both men were thoroughly capable ; both were heartily hated by the nation ; both figured as villains in ballads of the day ; both showed the same virtue of faithfulness to a sovereign, who in either case made devotion an ill return.

Thomas Wolsey's political career stretches over a com-

paratively small period. In twenty years he passed from a position of obscurity to one of imperial luxury and fame, from the giddy heights of which, he subsequently fell into the uttermost depths of disgrace and shame. His entire life was painted in bold colours. He knew intense joy and intense pain ; he tasted the extreme of royal favour and the depth of royal contempt. His career was watched by his contemporaries with undisguised envy and fury. They hated him because of his power over the king ; they hated him for his extravagant and wanton way of living ; they hated him for his oppressive rule over the poor. The vigour of their feeling was voiced in many a ballad, one of which, addressed to Henry himself, declared :

"God save king Harry, our noble king,  
And all that be to him loving !  
God save our queen ! God save her grace !  
God save our princess, that lovely face.  
  
And spare your pleasure for a season,  
And study remedy by your own reason,  
To set your realme in quietnesse,  
That now is in great heaviness.  
To see a churl, a butcher's cur,  
To reign and rule in such honour  
It is too high, without measure,  
His pride hath wasted much of your treasure.  
O gracious king ! revert your mind  
From that churl, born by kynde,  
And from that vile butcher's brood,  
For he shall never do your grace good.  
He blindeth your grace with subtle reason,  
And undermineth you by high treason ;  
And if your grace would please to hear,  
His falsehood and treason shall appear."

How had Wolsey come to occupy a position in which he excited at once such hatred and such jealousy? The

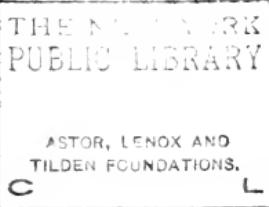
circumstances of his birth did not portend future greatness. He was the son of well-to-do middle-class parents, who belonged to Ipswich. They had no hold upon the court ; no means of wresting royal favours for their son ; no thought even that he would ever be able to win them. Meanwhile they sent the boy to college at Oxford, where he soon proved that if he were without distinction in birth he was at least possessed of an intelligence that might go far towards bringing him renown. Before long he was appointed chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and thus began the first of the events which were to lead him to court. Shortly afterwards an opportunity arose by which Wolsey, through the favour of Bishop Fox, was brought to the notice of the king. This was Henry VII., for as yet the accession of Henry VIII. had not taken place. Nevertheless it followed soon afterwards, and thus at the moment when the strong young hands of the new sovereign were gripping the sceptre, Wolsey found himself already established at a court which promised to become one of the most brilliant and famous in Europe.

Henry VIII.'s keen eye soon fell upon the priest who betrayed by his face the possession of such strength and intelligence, and he resolved to promote him. He made him Bishop of Lincoln in 1514, and from that date Wolsey advanced quickly and steadily till by the end of the following year he had been made cardinal by the Pope and chancellor by the king. Thus he who such a short time ago had been only one of the humble subjects of the realm now flaunted himself as supreme in matters of the Church and of the State. Nobles and people alike began to look askance upon one who regarded himself as equal to the king ; who had even been known to boast in the remark " *ego et rex meus.*"



Cardinal Wolsey

Photo W. A. Mansell & Co.



Nevertheless, in spite of his proud saying, Wolsey was diplomatic enough to make the king believe that his minister was entirely subservient to his wishes. Indeed, in the matter of fostering the stability of the Crown and increasing the glory of the English throne, Wolsey was as zealous as Henry himself, and the king's eagerness in the matter was not greater than that which was harboured in the brain of the powerful, ambitious minister. Henry found much to praise in the carefully-planned schemes by which his policy in the State was supported by Wolsey. He found no fault with the lavish display of luxury in which the cardinal indulged, for the king himself was a spendthrift and prone to inordinate show. He saw much to admire in the untiring energy, the ceaseless watchfulness and the intrepid bearing of his favourite. Strong himself, he recognised strength in others, and while a monarch of less independence might have feared to place in the hands of one man such unrestricted and extensive power, Henry judged shrewdly and wisely that his own greatness had nothing to fear from that of Wolsey, but that rather were his minister less powerful, he would be more dangerous. For then he would be ceaselessly occupied in striving against his master. Whereas now, as almost the equal of the king, he faithfully abetted a sovereign who heaped rich favours upon him.

Any affection that animated Wolsey's bosom was given to the young sovereign ; and if upon rare occasions warm feelings stirred his selfish, calculating spirit, they were roused only on behalf of his royal master. He loved Henry as much as it was in his power to love at all. Henry, on the other hand, regarded Wolsey only for his talents ; and even when he exalted him, the thought was not far from his mind that if needs be the ladder of promotion could be suddenly removed, and the ambitious

cardinal flung to the ground, from whence he had climbed to so perilous a height.

Wolsey had first won favour with Henry VII. by a comparatively trifling event. Having been entrusted with despatches for the emperor from the king, he had shown himself so prompt in his movements that he contrived to travel from London to Flanders and back again in a space of less than four days. On his return, the king, meeting him by chance, and supposing he had not yet set out, asked severely how it was he had delayed his going. "Sire, I am just returned," replied Wolsey, and he handed him the emperor's letter. This incident had no doubt been often related, and would be certain to attract the attention of the young prince, soon to become king. Thus before his accession, Henry VIII. had recognised in Wolsey valuable qualities of promptitude and decision, and he now saw that by elevating his new minister he would be advancing one whose character and ability could be of immense service to himself. He promoted him therefore to suit his own ends, and now that Wolsey had reached a position of unrivalled greatness in the country, the king was still moved by no warmer feelings towards him. He regarded him as valuable to himself, and therefore he was well content to place so much power into the cardinal's hands.

Conscious of the uncertainty of the king's favour, and anxious to take the last and most luscious grape of the bunch within his eager grasp, Wolsey cast his eyes upon the papal throne. Once let him gain this and then not Henry himself could overthrow him. The hated nobles of England might denounce him at their ease; nothing could shake him upon that secure eminence.

But before he could hope to have any chance of winning such a prize, there were many things that would have to

be done. Very warily, therefore, he set to work to make his plans. He dreamed of securing for Henry the throne of the emperor, left vacant by the death of Maximilian in 1519. With Henry as emperor, the road to the papal chair would be easy for his favourite, for no other monarch in Europe would combine so much power. Charles of Spain and Francis of France had, however, to be settled with. Both put forward claims for the crown of Maximilian. From the first the claim of Henry was obviously absurd and impossible, and he soon withdrew from the contest. Shortly afterwards Charles V. obtained the coveted honour, and in 1520 he was proclaimed emperor. Wolsey's great scheme had failed, but his policy had at least had the effect of making both France and Spain sue for the friendship of England, so that by playing off one against the other, Wolsey hoped to preserve peace and also to advance his own ends. Leo X. was becoming old and infirm ; if Wolsey could ingratiate himself with the emperor, he might even yet be made Pope. At the same time he dared not break with Francis ; for if war should break out, then his plans would almost certainly be wrecked. Therefore he sought to push his cause with both, and at the same time to restrain the impatience of the king, who was yearning for an excuse for war. By flattering him with the assurance that it was himself who maintained the balance between France and Spain, and that his friendship was therefore of vital importance to each, Wolsey managed for the time to secure the peace of Europe. Thus while the cardinal was engrossed in connecting the threads by which he hoped to obtain his heart's desire, the years in England passed by in quietness. But a rude awakening was at hand. In 1522 Leo died, and another, not Wolsey, was named in his stead. Aware of Wolsey's disappointment, the emperor wrote : "The new Pope is old

and sickly ; he cannot hold his office long. . . . Beg the Cardinal of York for my sake to take great care of his health." But Wolsey's anger could not thus be easily appeased, and his spirit was torn with fury as he realised that the prize had probably gone for ever. His anxiety was further deepened by Henry's sudden and decisive assertion of war against France. Wolsey's policy had always been one of avoiding to summon Parliament, for he saw in the Commons a natural foe to the supremacy at which Henry aimed. For eight years the minister had managed, unaided, and he drew back in alarm from a contest with the House. He even tried to meet the expenses of the war by a forced loan ; but the entire failure of his proposal threw him back upon Parliament. The murmur of discontent against Wolsey's methods increased in volume, and there was every sign of a sudden and powerful rebellion among the farming classes of the country. In spite of the entreaties of the harassed minister, war with France was begun in 1521. From the outset England found herself baffled, and in 1525 Wolsey contrived to conclude a peace. This striving for peace, which was always the aim of the cardinal, is the keynote of his policy, and the most signal proof of his greatness. No doubt motives of self-advancement found a part in his schemes ; but on the other hand, no policy could so much have strengthened England's position abroad at that time as this plan of making her a power to be sought after by the two countries, France and Spain, from whom she had most to fear. Under Henry VII. England as a nation had counted on the Continent for very little, but now, beneath the strong rule of Henry VIII., ably supported by the diplomatic cardinal, she had become a power to be reckoned with, a country of significance beyond her own borders.

But in 1526, at the close of the year, the cardinal embarked on a scheme, the consequences of which were to prove themselves very different from what he hoped and expected. With the motive of drawing closer the friendship with France he suggested to Henry that he should divorce Queen Catharine, on the ground that since she had been the widow of his brother, Henry's marriage with her was invalid. Thus began the famous case which led at last to the downfall of the minister, who had for so long maintained a position second only in importance to that held by the king himself.

Henry's voluptuous nature seized eagerly upon the notion of divorce, and excited by the new idea he lost no time in fixing his affections upon Anne Boleyn, one of the maids of the unfortunate queen, now so suddenly and so ruthlessly subjected to public ignominy.

The news of Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn filled Wolsey with despair. This was not at all what he had expected or desired. His intention had been that Henry should marry a princess of French blood and so make fast the bond between the two countries. An alliance with Anne Boleyn, a relation of the Duke of Norfolk, it is true, but otherwise a gentlewoman of no great birth, would only promote ill-feeling in England. Moreover such a match would rouse the hatred of Spain, because of the insult offered to Catharine; and at the same time it would do nothing to draw closer the tie with France. The self-contained minister for once lost control of himself, and flinging himself distractedly upon his knees before Henry he begged him to abandon the project. But Henry was in no mood to be crossed by any minister, however powerful or however diplomatic, and he spurned Wolsey roughly from him.

Soon the countryside rang with news of the king's intention, and the case of the ill-fated Catharine was the

theme upon every lip. An appeal to the Pope to settle the matter brought little relief, and Wolsey, distraught with grief at the confusion which had arisen out of the plan he himself had been the first to suggest, saw instead of the peace he had hoped to establish, England embroiled with the whole of Europe.

Meanwhile difficulties were thickening for the cardinal. The appeal from Henry to the Pope, Clement VII., to settle the matter had brought back the reply that the Pope would entrust the case to Cardinal Wolsey and an Italian representative, Cardinal Campeggio, whose decision would be final. But while the Pope told Campeggio to set off on his errand, he at the same time handed him instructions commanding him to be as dilatory as possible. Campeggio was nothing loth, and month after month was thus wasted in excuses. Henry's impatience was beginning to burn fiercely, and he unjustly blamed Wolsey for the delay. It was not till 1529 that the two cardinals opened their court, and scarcely had they begun the trial when Campeggio was summoned back by the Pope. This further delay exasperated the headstrong king, who saw matters left in exactly the same position they had been in two years ago, when the question of the divorce had been first raised. He turned furiously upon his minister and heaped insults upon him. His anger was further inflamed by the energy of the Norfolks, who lost no opportunity of attacking Wolsey, in whom they saw a steady opponent to the marriage with Anne Boleyn. Every noble seized the chance for turning upon one who had been so long and so bitterly hated, and no one stayed from flinging abuse at the disgraced favourite. The clamour soon passed from the court to the country, and the story of Wolsey's career sounded black indeed as it was told in the mouths of those who had suffered from his tyranny. Desperate

at the failure of his plans, deprived of his chancellorship, and despised by everyone, the wretched cardinal sought retreat in his diocese of York. Here for a time he threw aside statecraft and entered into the administration of his office in the Church. But enemies everywhere watched him, and the news that he was in communication with France sealed his doom. Long ago Henry had acquiesced when Wolsey had accepted the position of legate which the Pope had conferred upon him, but now it was infamously stated that by this act the fallen minister had broken the Statute of *Præmunire*. A charge of treason was further brought against him when the negotiations with France were suspected and an angry demand recalled him to London. But the strain of the last few years, and the bitterness of his disgrace, had enfeebled the health of the proud cardinal. He began his journey to the capital, but he never finished it ; for death overtook him as he reached Leicester. Just before he died he uttered words which have often been repeated : "Master Kingston, had I but served God as diligently as I have served the King, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs. Howbeit this is the just reward that I must receive for my worldly diligence and pains that I have had to do him service only to satisfy his vain pleasure, not regarding my godly duty." But a moment later his old affection for his sovereign made itself felt when he desired that Kingston should commend him to the king, " who is sure a prince of a royal courage and hath a princely heart." Even with death at his elbow Wolsey could still fix his mind on things of political interest, and he cried impetuously to his faithful servant, who watched beside him : " Say furthermore that I request his Grace in God's name that he have a vigilant eye to deprive this new pernicious sect of Lutherans that it do not increase within

his dominions by his negligence in such a sort, as that he shall be fain at length to put harness upon his back to subdue them."

Very different views on this point, however, were to be expressed by Wolsey's successor, Cromwell. Meanwhile, Wolsey's end was at hand, and with a last injunction to Master Kingston that he should not forget his message, the great cardinal passed away.

Exactly in which year Wolsey's birth had taken place is uncertain, but it was probably about 1471. Thus at the time of his death he would not be much more than fifty years old. But he had long been harassed with anxiety, and now, worn out with care and ambition, he seemed already aged. His career had opened with unusual splendour ; round its close there hovered shame and disgrace. But Wolsey had not played his part, ignoble as it sometimes may have been, without leaving his mark on the country. By his far-seeing policy of peace he had advanced the welfare of England ; but his services were little appreciated by a people who saw in him only a tyrannical favourite, bent upon self-advancement. His wider aims were hidden from them, and they found nothing to regret in his death. Even the king, who owed so much to Wolsey's faithful co-operation, was unmoved by the news. And he who had been wont to be followed at every step that he took by a train of servants and a bevy of sycophants, ended his life unattended and unlamented.

## THOMAS CROMWELL

*"Thou wouldest never to virtue apply  
But coveted ever to climb too high,  
And now thou hast trodden thy shoe awry,  
Sing trolle on away."<sup>11</sup>*

CONTEMPORARY BALLAD

THE gorgeous figure of Wolsey which swept across the early years of the reign of Henry VIII. had hardly faded out of sight when a new and more sinister form made its appearance. Thomas Cromwell, the king's new adviser, from the first bade fair to deserve from the English people that concentrated hate which was to be his reward for the ten years' service he was about to render the monarch. In the history of his short career one high virtue, nevertheless, makes its appearance—the faithfulness which he showed to his master, Wolsey.

When the face of the king was turned away from his old favourite; when the Commons were pointing to him with an accusing finger; when the nobles were breathing out open vengeance, and the people to a man were venting scorn and abuse on the head of the fallen minister; when there was not one to speak a word on behalf of the man, who so short a time since had summoned a troop by the merest beck of his finger; when the sum of his desolation was complete, then Thomas Cromwell stood forth and spoke boldly for his master. But for his warm pleading it is probable that Wolsey would not have been permitted to retire to York, but would have been executed then and

there. Yet so strongly did Cromwell beseech, and so deep was the impression made by his fearless support of one who was universally despised, that for the moment the uttermost sentence was averted and Wolsey went in safety to the North. Henry, who was himself incapable of so deep a devotion, saw in Cromwell's behaviour a sign of nobility that roused his amazement, and he declared him to be "the most faithful servant."

But against this one brave deed of Cromwell must be set an array of crimes, of so dark a character and so cold-blooded a nature, that they have caused him to be handed down in history as one of the most relentless and unscrupulous of men.

Very little is known about the early life of this remarkable man, who, during ten short years of favour, contrived to bring about so many and such drastic changes in the country that he may be said to have effected, by his own personal efforts, nothing less than a revolution. On his own confession he was "a ruffian" in his young days, and contemporary ballads assert that his father followed the business of a fuller. A love of excitement and fighting took him, when a youth, to Italy as a soldier; but ere he had reached middle life, he returned to England and settled down to make money by trade. His conspicuous ability soon made him successful, and as he grew in prosperity there sprang up in his heart one supreme desire—that he might enter the service of the great cardinal.

It was natural that the career of Wolsey should have such a powerful attraction for the mind of a young man like Cromwell. He saw in the cardinal the controller of power, and his own unbridled ambition made him long to experience the same delight. Power was the touchstone by which he tried everyone, and according as they possessed it or lacked it, he judged them to have succeeded or

failed. As supreme minister in the Church and State, Wolsey therefore wielded a sway that might well excite the admiration of a novice with so supremely ambitious a temperament.

In 1524 he was admitted into the service he coveted, and thus he passed the first milestone on the road he had planned out he would tread. Wolsey was at the moment occupied in setting up two colleges, one at Oxford, known as Cardinal College (now Christ Church), and the other at Ipswich. To obtain money for their establishment he had been granted permission to demolish sundry monasteries known to be corrupt, and for this he needed the help of a man as determined and as strong-willed as himself. His eye fell upon Cromwell, and henceforward the fuller's son became the ardent disciple and servant of the once derided son of a butcher.

But though Cromwell thus owed much of his training to the influence of Wolsey, his policy was very different in its real aim. Both men aimed at the glorification of the Crown, but with Wolsey the question was marked by larger motives than it was with Cromwell. Wolsey was a statesman who desired to manipulate the power of England so that she might be recognised as of consequence abroad ; to him the consolidation of the king meant the supremacy of the English people, and therefore their good. Cromwell looked on things with a less statesmanlike view. He, too, aimed at the consolidation of the Crown, but the supremacy that he desired had in it no thought of the good of the people generally ; he wanted to create a despotism within the land ; he neglected the larger issues outside. A despotic king might do as he liked in any and every matter, and this was what Cromwell set about trying to make Henry VIII.

On Wolsey's death in 1530, Cromwell became Henry's

chief adviser. Immediately the self-seeking courtier, who had none of the reverence for royalty which, at the bottom, had always marked Wolsey's demeanour towards Henry, set about getting within his grip not only the Church and the State, but the king himself. The bold policy he meant to follow out was indicated first of all in his advice to the king in regard to the divorce of Catharine of Arragon. "Proclaim yourself supreme head of the Church in England," he advised, "then try the case in your own ecclesiastical courts and the rest will be easy enough."

Even Henry's high-handed disposition shrank from such an arbitrary course, and for the moment he hesitated. But reflection convinced him it was the only practical way out of the difficulty, and he resolved to act upon his minister's advice. In 1531 he sent word to Convocation, desiring them to acknowledge him as Supreme Head of the English Church. He was answered by a gloomy acquiescence, protected by the words, "quantum per Christi leges licet," upon which he proceeded to send away Catharine. Two years later the marriage with Anne Boleyn was duly carried out.

The occasion of the coronation was marked by scenes of the greatest revelry. It was the end of May, and London was decked out gaily to greet the new queen. "All the worshipful Crafts and Occupations in their best array, goodly beseen, took their barges which were so played with goodly banners fresh and new, with the cognizance and arms of their faculty; to the number of fifty great barges, comely beseen, and every barge had minstrels making great and sweet harmony. . . . And so following in good order, every Craft in their degree and order, till they came to Greenwich, and there tarried; abiding the Queen's Grace, which was a wonderful and goodly sight to behold." Last of all in this splendid procession came

Queen Anne herself, radiant at the thought of the new glory she had attained by mating with the powerful Henry. Thus she passed on in a magnificent boat to the Tower wharf, where “the king received her Grace with a noble, loving countenance.” From here she passed through the city of Westminster amid a “wonderful number of people,” edging one another in their eagerness to gaze upon the features of the new queen. From time to time her chariot was stopped as she reached a spot where a pageant was stationed. Of these the most magnificent was at St Paul’s; while at Cheapside had been erected a fountain from which ran out “white wine, claret and red wine, in great plenty all that afternoon.” In this fashion was crowned a queen, who three years later was beheaded, at the command of her royal husband, himself next day married to another wife.

Cromwell’s share in the triumph enjoyed by Anne Boleyn, raised him to yet higher eminence, and Henry depended daily more and more upon his advice. Determined to maintain the power which he had displayed in the Act of Supremacy of 1534, by which he had made himself proclaimed head of the Church and clergy of England, the king filled up the bishoprics and livings with his own nominees; and soon from every pulpit in the kingdom the absolute supremacy of the king was preached. Meanwhile Cromwell was ever at his elbow, dictating his policy. As he watched his sovereign bending in the direction he desired him to take, his heart swelled with pride and exultation; for in himself he saw a greater than the king. In 1535 he was appointed Vicar-General, with full power to act for the king in all matters concerning the Church.Flushed with the thought of the power he wielded, Cromwell coveted the fruits of despotism. In the monasteries he saw his objective. These homes of the monks had long

fallen from the post of importance they had held in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They were now little more than the relics of a bygone day. In the more isolated districts they still served as the centre of the community, but for the most part they had lost the vigour that formerly distinguished them. Their overthrow would provide money for the royal coffers, and the new ecclesiastical offices which would be founded in their place would be established in accordance with the will of the king ; and thus the danger of discord within the Church would be lessened.

A report from Cromwell to Parliament sealed the doom of the lesser of these houses, and it was decided they should be overthrown. With zest Cromwell threw himself into a task that was so congenial to his mind, and the year 1536 saw the downfall of all monasteries with a revenue of less than £200 a year. Discontent at this action showed itself in rebellions ; but Henry and his minister were not to be turned aside from their course. The greater monasteries next came under their scrutiny, and though these could not be swept away wholesale, by one general law, as the others had been, good reasons were found for advising the demolition of them individually ; and so thoroughly was the work carried out, that by 1540 England had not a single monastery left within her borders. Six new bishoprics—Chester, Gloucester, Bristol, Peterborough, Westminster and Oxford—were established in their place, and the ecclesiastic system, which Cromwell had been the first to design, reached its climax. Henry was now the only person with any real authority in ecclesiastical affairs. Henceforward his control over the Church was as entire and complete as it was over the Commons and his subjects generally.

Now that Henry had thus got the whole Church within his grip, Cromwell urged upon him the necessity of regu-

lating the faith within the Church. He declared that it was not enough for the king to govern the Church unless he also dictated what was to be believed within that Church. Henry himself was determined to let no new faith usurp undue power ; the monarch and the Church were to be synonymous. Therefore, the Statute of the Six Articles (1539) was drawn up, and obedience to its conditions insisted upon throughout the country. The faith thus declared was one that ill pleased the reformers. Amongst other things it insisted upon transubstantiation and private confession, and the penalty for disobedience to the Act was death, either by burning or hanging.

With this authority to support him, Cromwell was now able to wreak his severest vengeance on those who opposed the king. Few indeed were the cases in which mercy tempered his justice. With brutal coolness he marked down each victim, and saw the sentence carried out to its cruel end. He spared the life of no one who had dared to question the authority of the king, and execution after execution showed his nature to be utterly relentless and vindictive. Young and old, learned and noble, brave and pious, all were branded alike, if they did but commit the one unforgivable crime of opposing themselves to the will of Henry, though it might be in but the smallest matter. Nothing could save even a man of such pure character as Sir Thomas More, condemned alike by Cromwell and Cranmer. No feeling of remorse rose in Cromwell's dark mind at the thought of the axe terminating so noble a life.

Under a rule of such fierce tyranny England was petrified into compliance ; but it was a compliance that was only biding its time. Cromwell was marked in the nation's eye as one upon whom vengeance must sooner or later

fall ; and men prayed earnestly for it to be soon, so that they might be rid of so intolerable and intolerant a foe.

Like Wolsey, Cromwell's fall came suddenly, and at a moment when it was least expected. The execution of Anne Boleyn in 1536 had been followed by the death next year of her successor, Jane Seymour, and now Henry was casting about for a fourth wife. Cromwell seized upon the opportunity to suggest an alliance with the sister of the Duke of Cleves, a Protestant prince, who was one of the most powerful enemies to the emperor. There were good reasons why England should ally herself with the foes of Charles, since the friendship which had sprung up between France and the emperor threatened to disturb the peace of England. Such personal sympathies as Cromwell experienced, moreover, had always been on the side of Protestantism, so he had double reasons for advocating the union. Under these circumstances the match was arranged. But scarcely had the wedding been solemnised when Henry conceived a dislike for his bride, and the alliance was declared invalid. The result of this startling *dénouement* swept suddenly upon Cromwell, and bore away in one strong rush the position he had built up for himself, as he thought, so securely. Smarting with chagrin and vexation Henry turned furiously upon his minister ; the nobles, quick to take advantage of one whom they had long detested, filled the king's ear with stories of Cromwell's pride. The unhappy favourite, now flung into the lowest depths of disgrace, was cast into the Tower. In such moments of crisis Cromwell's character always showed at its best. Once he had daringly befriended Wolsey in his fall ; now that his own turn to experience disgrace had come he faced misfortune with a dauntless countenance. He had pleaded for Wolsey, but there was

no one to plead for him. Every eye was hostile ; every lip was full of accusing ; every heart had already condemned him. Yet if ever a statesman had laboured with the sole aim of increasing the power of his sovereign it was Cromwell. Everything that he had carried out had been inspired with the single idea of making Henry supreme. But Henry's attitude no longer showed any friendliness, and his eye was dark and cold as he gazed upon the fallen minister. Feeling that his doom was sealed, Cromwell only asked that his sentence might be carried out quickly. The idea of lingering in prison was intolerable to his haughty mind ; and this torture at least he was not to experience. The charge of treason was suggested, but even the most eager of his enemies could find nothing against him which might be considered under this head. A bill of attainder was therefore brought in, and without a trial he was appointed to be executed. His sentence was at once carried out and he was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1540, two months after he had been first accused of treason, and only three months since he had seemed to be at the very zenith of power. His downfall and death were openly rejoiced in by the common people, who justly regarded him as a greedy and cruel tyrant, to whom they owed much of their poverty and oppression. Their pleasure in his pain found open expression, and not a voice was heard bemoaning his fate. Ballad makers reflected the general feeling in their ditties, and there was heartiness and vigour in the tone with which the people chanted :

*" Both man and child is glad to hear tell  
Of that false traitour, Thomas Cromwell ;  
Now that he is set to learn to spell,  
Sing trolle on away ;*

*Both plate and chalice came to thy fist,  
Thou lock'st them up where no man wist  
Till in the king's treasure such things were missed,  
Sing trolle on away.*

*Thou mightest have learnt thy soul to flock  
Upon thy greasy fuller's stock,  
Wherfore lay down thy head upon this block,  
Sing trolle on away."*

The first half of Henry's reign had seen the downfall of Thomas Wolsey ; the second half marked the crash of the ruin of Thomas Cromwell. A few years more and death would force Henry himself to yield the sceptre into the hands of another. But as yet he grasped it firmly and reflected proudly upon its significance. How much of that significance was due to the zealous efforts of the two men who had in turn so strenuously upheld their sovereign, it is perhaps difficult to estimate. Certainly Henry himself never tried to gauge the depth of his obligations. He used both men while he needed them, but when occasion made them useless, he cast them aside with as little thought as he would throw down a faded flower.

## MARTIN LUTHER

*"That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it ;  
This high man with a great thing to pursue  
Dies ere he knows it.*

*That, has the world here—should he need the next,  
Let the world mind him !  
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed  
Seeking shall find him."*

BROWNING

DURING the years in which Henry VIII. was busy working out a policy which would establish the entire isolation of the English Crown, Martin Luther, a young monk in Germany, was taking steps which would later lead to the independence of religion.

As yet England was bound to Rome by ties of custom and friendship ; as yet Germany was subject to the rule of the papal supremacy. But a day was coming when England and Germany should each assert an opposition which would shake the throne of the Pope to its base. Yet the note of antagonism from Germany was to be very different from that sounded by Henry VIII. ; nor was there ever to be any alliance between the headstrong, prudent king and the headstrong, imprudent monk. The name of the Reformation has become linked with that of Henry VIII., but this must not be taken to imply that Henry regarded Luther with any favour. On the contrary, he always showed him the bitterest hostility, and was zealous in putting down those of his subjects who lent an ear to the Lutheran doctrines. Yet the career of Luther

exercised such an abiding and widespread influence over the Continent, and did so much towards shaping the future development of religion in England, that no true idea of Tudor times can be gathered without a consideration of his career.

Luther was born in 1483, in Eisleben. He was the son of very poor parents, who nevertheless had a great desire to see their boy filled with a love for learning. With unselfish devotion they stinted themselves that they might be able to send him to school and college, and though in the meantime the student himself was so poor that he was at times forced to beg for bread in the streets, yet he held on to the path he had mapped out, and the year 1505 saw him M.A. and Doctor of Philosophy at Erfurth University. The news of his son's success reached the ears of John Luther in his cottage home and filled him with natural pride. Here was a son of whom he could be proud, and the thought swept away all remembrance of the hardships he had endured to make that college career possible. He spoke of him affectionately and proudly, and looking into the future he saw the name of Martin Luther famous throughout the country as that of a brilliant scholar. Martin Luther was indeed destined to become famous, but not in the way that his father imagined.

Whilst a student at Erfurth, Luther had one day been searching through the shelves of the college library, and so had come by accident upon a Bible. It was the first time in his life he had seen such a volume. He looked at it with interest and began to read. Soon his interest had deepened to eagerness, and as he turned over the pages he burned with desire to possess the book. Already he was beginning to show that deep concern about religion which was afterwards to make him the leader of the Reformation.



Martin Luther

L. Cranach

Photo Tamme

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

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Scarcely had he taken his degree and settled down to his work as a teacher of philosophy, when he became restless and unhappy, and a narrow escape from death by lightning soon after, made him resolve to enter the cloister. Full of this resolve he invited his friends to a supper-party, at the end of which he told them his intention. The news came like a thunderclap to his companions, who saw a brilliant academic future in front of their friend. Dismay overspread their faces just now sparkling with laughter, and they begged him to cease from entertaining so foolish a notion. But Martin Luther was in deadly earnest, and that same night, when his friends had gone, fearful lest he should break through his resolve, he went to the Augustine convent near by and was admitted there as a monk. Next morning his friends came round to his room, full of arguments and persuasions. But when they knocked at his door he had already gone.

Three years passed, during which Luther, after great despair and anguish, found calm. His brilliant ability, and his evident sincerity, attracted meanwhile the notice of Frederick the Elector of Saxony, who called him to be a professor at Wittemberg. This summons could not be neglected, even by a monk. Therefore Luther hastened to Wittemberg, and joining the Augustine convent there, he undertook to carry on simultaneously his duties as a monk and his work at the university. This college at Wittemberg was one which Frederick had founded in 1502, saying he and his people "would look to it as an oracle"! And an oracle it did become, not only to Germany but to the whole of Europe.

Frederick's belief in Luther's powers was soon justified, for his teaching quickly attracted new students. Those who came were impressed no less by his earnestness than by his eloquence. They felt him to be a man who was

fighting out the problems of life for himself, and they were eager to see the end.

In 1516 a scandalous traffic in indulgences under a monk named Tetzel roused Luther's fury. He saw the people in their ignorance being stripped of their poor little savings, through the persuasions of a man who cared more for money than for truth. Every sin had its own price—so much for theft, so much for murder, so much for perjury. Once the sum was paid over, then Tetzel assured the buyer he need not think any more about his crimes; and in return for this money he handed him a paper "indulgence" or pardon. The effect of such a wanton and wholesale transaction threatened to be most disastrous. Not only did it mean that crime would become common, since by paying a sum the evildoer could clear his conscience; but it weakened the moral character of the people, by making them place ignorant confidence in a priest instead of relying upon what their own moral sense told them was right.

"If God permit I will make a hole in his drum!" cried Luther when he heard of Tetzel's deeds, and the following year, by nailing his theses against indulgences upon the church door, he initiated open warfare. Thus began the struggle in the Church which was to culminate in the Reformation.

At first the contest excited little uneasiness. Even the Pope called Luther "a very fine genius," and saw nothing in his action to foreshadow the rent afterwards to be torn by the monk in the Roman system. On his part also, Luther strenuously upheld the Pope. In attacking Tetzel he did not attack the Pope's right to grant indulgences; he only attacked the abuse of the practice.

By 1518 matters had become more serious and Luther was summoned to Rome. Through the friendship

of Frederick of Saxony the trial was transferred to Augsburg, and so the reformer escaped the death he would almost certainly have met with amid his fiery-eyed enemies in Rome. But the Augsburg Conference did nothing to lessen the struggle, which instead grew daily in intensity. At Frederick's request Luther was about to seek safety in France when the Emperor Maximilian died. For the moment everything else was forgotten in the change in the political situation. Charles of Spain became emperor, and the Pope waited to see what position such a powerful monarch would take in the controversy. Luther himself lost no time in imploring the protection of the new ruler. "Oh Charles! first of the kings of the earth, I throw myself a suppliant at the feet of your most serene Majesty. Deign to receive under the shadow of your wings, not me, but the cause of that eternal truth, for the defence of which God has entrusted you with the sword."

Such a letter must have sounded strange and unfamiliar in the ears of the gay young monarch, who by his accession largely extended a power already great, and he made no reply to the epistle.

Left unmolested for a time, Luther's energy gained fresh ardour, and in 1520 he published his famous *Appeal on the Reformation of Christianity*. Eight days earlier the Pope had issued a bull against him, which, coupled with the *Appeal*, brought him at once into the open as an opponent of Rome.

No small stir was thus caused by Luther's *Appeal*, and for the first time England became actively aware of the struggle which was taking place in Germany.

The news roused Henry to anger, for in Luther his keen foresight showed him a rebel whose influence might extend far beyond his own land, and he exclaimed energetically: "If Luther will not be converted let him and his

writings be burned together." Not content with publicly consuming all copies of the book that could be procured, he himself rushed into the fray, and published his *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, which won for him from the Pope the title, "Defender of the Faith." Luther had not stopped to choose the words in which he had hurled his challenge, and the king of England showed himself equally apt at the attack. Every abusive name that he could master was flung at the German monk, and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, was only seconding the words of his sovereign when he declared : "Now Luther is become a big fox. . . . What do I say ? . . . a fox ? He is a mad dog, a ravening wolf, a cruel bear, or rather all those animals in one ; for the monster includes many beasts within him."

But if Henry VIII. took up his pen hurriedly he also laid it down in haste. He realised that by entering into the arena he had made himself one with the general combatants, and this ill befitted one who was bent upon a system of supremacy. Therefore he condescended to no further direct reply to Luther, but his watchful eye was keen to note the political developments of the position, and he watched with unflagging attention.

In 1520, the Pope's bull,—so called from the "bulla" or seal with which it was stamped,—was carried out in Germany, and as a consequence Luther's books were everywhere publicly burnt. Luther's retort was quick and decisive. On 10th December 1520, after due proclamation, he burnt in the market-square of Wittemberg the bull, the canon law, and the decretals of the Church.

From this date the struggle between Luther and Rome raged fiercely. Summoned to the diet of Worms he defended his conduct in a magnificent address, which won the admiration of even those who were hostile to him.

His friends, as they listened, trembled for him, but Luther himself remained utterly unmoved. With a fearlessness which scorned to flatter, even though he was in imminent danger from enemies, who surrounded him on every side, he closed his speech simply and significantly : "Here I stand, I can do no other. May God help me. Amen !" His decisive words left no doubt as to his firm intentions, and those who were in sympathy with him watched his life anxiously. Banishment seemed the smallest punishment likely to be given him : death the most probable. Luther himself seemed quite untroubled by either thought. He determined to return to Wittemberg, visiting his kinsfolk on the way ; and with this purpose he set out for Möhra, the old home of his father. Suddenly he was seized and carried away a prisoner to the Wartburg, a gloomy castle built on a menacing rock near the Thuringian forest. "Luther has been abducted," ran the rumour, and everyone pictured him dead, or at least a prisoner in the hands of enemies. In reality his capture had been planned by his friend Frederick as the only way of saving his life for the moment. Once inside the castle the monk was treated with every kindness. Tricked out in the disguise of a soldier, he was addressed as Knight George, and otherwise left quite free to occupy himself as he pleased.

Thus while many were mourning him as dead, the reformer was busy, in his secure prison, writing fresh treatises against Rome.

Next year, when danger had for the time blown over, Luther quitted his hiding-place and returned to Wittemberg. His reappearance caused the greatest joy, and many who had wept for him as dead could scarcely believe that they saw him. The death of Frederick in 1525 robbed Luther of a true friend, and one to whom the Reformation

owes not a little. His successor to the electorate, John of Saxony, however, was equally ardent in his support of the reformer, and during his rule the famous "Protestation" was made, by which fourteen cities protested on behalf of liberty in religion. This was in 1529, and the people who protested thus won the name of Protestants. Four years previous to this, Luther had married. His action was freely criticised by many who were still averse to marriage by one who had taken monkish vows.

But Luther's independence was much too great for him to pay heed to any of the criticisms levelled against him. In 1525, having become aware of the breach that had taken place between Henry VIII. and Rome, he had written to the English sovereign a letter beginning : "I am informed that your Majesty is beginning to favour the Gospel," and this letter he had afterwards had printed and circulated. But Luther was mistaken in the real meaning of Henry's action towards Rome, and he was not a little disconcerted when he received this fiery reply : " You offer to publish a book in my praise. . . . I thank you ! . . . you will praise me most by abusing me ; you will dishonour me beyond measure if you praise me." Henry had no idea of encouraging within his realm so independent a faith as Luther had set on foot in Germany. When he deposed the Pope from the head of the Church he put himself in his place ; he wished to retain the Church in its old form, only on a purely national basis. Therefore he showed no mercy to those whose sympathies inclined towards Lutheranism, and he persecuted all such with a vigour which sprang from motives of political expediency.

This abrupt failure of an alliance with England roused Luther's anger for a time, and he cried vehemently : " I said to myself *there are twelve hours in the day*. Who knows ? perhaps I may find one lucky hour to gain the

king of England. I therefore laid my humble epistle at his feet ; but alas ! the knaves have torn it ! ”

Rome, too, was still breathing out vengeance upon the prince of heretics ; but the political situation of the day kept Luther safe. In 1534 he published his German translation of the Bible, and from this date to the close of his career he lived in comparative calm. His life came to a quiet end, in 1546, while he was away in Eisleben, settling a quarrel about which his advice had been sought. His body was brought back to Wittemberg and buried there amid scenes of intense sorrow. Crowds gathered everywhere along the route to watch the procession pass on its slow way. Some wept openly in the streets, but many looked on with a silence which best expressed the depth of the desolation they felt. When the burial had taken place, Melanchthon, the friend of Luther, spoke : “ Everyone who truly knew him,” he said, “ must bear witness that he was a benevolent, charitable man, generous in all his discourses, kindly and most worthy of love, and neither rash, passionate, self-willed, nor ready to take offence. And nevertheless there was also in him an earnestness of courage in his words and bearing such as become a man like him. His heart was true and faithful and without falsehood. . . . His effigy will be placed in the city church, but his living portrait is enshrined in countless hearts.”

Few have been more hated than Luther ; few have been more loved. His character has excited the loudest praise, and the deepest contempt. His adherents and his enemies have been equally vigorous in their cries. But above all the tumult the figure of the man himself uprises, the son of a poor peasant ; a monk with a heart torn with a desire for holiness ; a reformer with a burning hatred of abuse ; a preacher with a tongue on fire against infamy ; a friend

with a generous hand and a warm heart ; a man of violent passions and strong actions; who was utterly without fear ; who cared nothing for worldly honours or distinctions. He won his way by the vigour of his character ; the love of fighting was natural to him, and he fought the fight he had undertaken with a courage that never failed. His very violence was distasteful to some, and the strength of his nature led him at times into expressions which even the custom of his day can hardly excuse. He never showed himself moved by selfish motives, and when he died he left behind him more than the memory of a life nobly lived, for he left a firmly planted slip of religious liberty, which, now grown to a giant tree, testifies to the greatness of his achievement.

## WILLIAM TYNDALE

*“Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in death so noble.”*

MILTON

**T**HE story of William Tyndale can be written in one short sentence : he translated the New Testament into English.

But though it is possible to sum up so briefly what he did during his life, a lengthy treatise is scarcely enough to estimate fully the importance of the work which he carried out. His life was spent during the reign of Henry VIII., and though throughout its greater part he lived abroad, in order that he might be able to print his translation unmolested, yet it was to England that his thoughts always turned ; England that he hoped to influence ; England for whom he endured banishment and persecution.

Very little is known about his birth and early life. He was probably born about 1490, somewhere “on the borders of Wales,” but beyond this nothing is known with certainty. Yet he must have loved books and learning from childhood ; for on leaving school he went to Oxford, where he soon became distinguished for his earnest character and his great knowledge. From Oxford he went to Cambridge, and at both universities he was the friend of the most brilliant scholars of the day, who were pushing on the New Learning with enthusiasm.

The first change in Tyndale's life came in 1521 when he left Cambridge to take up the post of tutor in the household of Sir John Walsh, a Gloucestershire squire, by whom he was warmly welcomed and honourably treated. Here he met with the clergy from the neighbouring districts, and found to his surprise and dismay that many of them cared little for anything save a life of ease. Here he determined to begin his work of translating the Bible. Hence it came about that it was in this pleasant manor-house, with its spacious gardens, its atmosphere of quiet ease and generous hospitality, that the scholar from Oxford and Cambridge sat down to think out his great plan. In this he was only following out an idea which had already been suggested by Erasmus, who declared that for his part he wished the Scriptures might be rendered into "all languages of all people," so that "the husbandman may sing parts of them at his plough, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way."

Meanwhile the clergy from the surrounding country districts were beginning to look coldly upon one, who showed open surprise at the careless way in which they performed their duties ; who even dared to declare that it was unfitting that the charge of a whole diocese should be in the hands of a foreign bishop, who lived at least a thousand miles away in Italy.

The pleasant country life in the quiet Gloucester village soon came to an end for Tyndale, and in 1523 he went to London to seek the aid of Bishop Tunstal. With a heart buoyed up by great schemes and bright hopes he stepped lightly through the streets of the city to the bishop's door. But disappointment met him here. The bishop was away ; he must wait. Restraining his impatience as well as he could, Tyndale set himself to pass the time till the prelate

should return. In the meantime, having secured lodgings, he found leisure to observe the doings in the city which was so new and strange to him. At no time could Tyndale have got a better idea of the general discontent then disturbing England than in London in the year 1523. Wolsey had just made his exorbitant demand upon Parliament for money for the war against France, and the story of the sturdy way in which the Commons had refused the request was told over and over again in the shops and inns. Everyone discussed the cardinal, and most people abused him. The scholar fresh from the university and the country found these clamours both interesting and distracting. Hitherto he had lived in an atmosphere of learning and peace ; now he was plunged suddenly into a whirlpool of noise and strife. For the first time he realised the extent of England, and the enormous difference between the manner in which various men spent their lives. But though he found much to interest him in his new surroundings he was still eager to see the bishop, to whom he was looking for practical help and encouragement in his work of translation. At last Tunstal returned, and Tyndale succeeded in obtaining his object. The interview was short, but it was long enough for the ardent scholar to discover that he would never get any assistance from the bishop ; while on his side the bishop looked coldly and impatiently upon such an eager disciple of reform. As Tyndale closed the door of the bishop's palace behind him he knew that he need never again look for help in this quarter. The thought depressed him, since he had hoped at least to be encouraged in his enterprise. But he soon cast aside his disappointment ; for he was too firmly convinced of what he was going to do, to turn aside from his purpose because one man had looked contemptuously upon him. Not daring to undertake to publish his

work in a city of which the bishop was so hostile, he resolved to go abroad, and in 1524 he set sail for Hamburg.

It was his farewell to England. From that day he never again returned to his native land. Resolved not to be baffled in his enterprise, he settled for a time in a lodging in one of the narrow, winding streets of the old town. His movements between this date and 1525 are uncertain. It is probable he visited Luther at Wittemberg and from there proceeded to Cologne where he at once set to work. No one came to interrupt him in his labours, and the finished sheets fell quickly from his fingers, so that twelve months after quitting England he was able to despatch thither copies of two of the gospels. In his work he was greatly assisted by his secretary, Roye, who entered warmly into the scheme. Their labours were carried on with great secrecy through fear of molestation. Once they were almost surprised, and only sudden flight by boat saved them. The precious manuscripts were hastily gathered up, and for the moment the enemies of the reformers were defeated.

Opposition from the Senate at Cologne compelled Tyndale and Roye to flee to Worms. Here they worked with such diligence and speed that by 1526 six thousand copies of the New Testament were ready for distribution. The question of smuggling these over to England was carefully planned out, and before long the greater portion of them was in circulation. Some were pounced upon by Tunstal, who denounced them vigorously, proclaiming that every copy was to be burnt. But even so, many escaped the destruction of the flames and were successfully hidden in houses where they were treasured. In rough verse Roye told the story of the bonfire made with the books they had toiled so hard to produce :

"*JEFFRAY.* Didst thou not hear what villany  
They did unto the Gospel?

*WATKINS.* Why? Did they against him conspire?

*JEFFRAY.* By my troth they set him a-fire  
Openly in London city:

*WATKINS.* Who caused it so to be done?

*JEFFRAY.* In sooth, the Bishop of London,  
With the Cardinal's authority;  
Which at Paul's Cross earnestly  
Denounced it to be heresy  
That the Gospel should come to light;

*He declared there in his furiousness  
That he found errors more or less  
Above three thousand in the translation.  
Howbeit, when all came to pass,  
I daresay unable he was  
Of one error to make probation."*

Meanwhile dangers were beginning to accumulate round Tyndale. His actions were being noised abroad in a way that caused him to be looked upon as the leader of a dangerous party, and his life began to be threatened.

He himself was not unaware of the danger he thus ran, but the simplicity of his nature kept him intent upon his work and careless about anything else that might happen. Thus while his name was being bandied about as that of a seditious rebel, the man himself was quietly writing his treatise on the *Obedience of a Christian Man*.

By-and-by the *Obedience* found its way to England. Here it roused the anger of More, who though a leader of the New Learning, was also an enthusiastic supporter of the old order in the Church. He declared it to be "a malicious book wherein the writer sheweth himself so puffed up with the poison of pride, malice and envy, that it is more than marvel that the skin can hold together." But Tyndale was little moved either by praise or blame.

He had taken a task in hand and he meant to carry it out. He did not, like Luther, set about reaching the people through preaching ; his method was to express himself in words and then leave it for his readers either to accept or reject them.

About the year 1533 the reformer was pressed to return to England, but he had no desire to enter needlessly into a country where he knew he would find many enemies, and as matters between Henry VIII. and the Emperor Charles were daily increasing in bitterness over the divorce question, Charles had no intention of putting Tyndale into English hands merely to oblige Henry. But even Tyndale's tranquil mind at last became aware of the danger in which he stood, and he moved to Antwerp, where he found a home with a wealthy and generous merchant, named Poyntz.

From here, in 1534, it is surmised that he sent a copy of the revised edition of his New Testament to Anne Boleyn, who had shown herself an energetic friend to the reformers. Further evidence seems to prove that the queen received the gift graciously, and a volume inscribed "Anna, Angliae Regina," in letters now faded with age, may still be seen in the British Museum. Though there is no direct evidence that this is a book sent by Tyndale to the queen, it is at least probable that such was the case.

In the comfortable home of the Poyntz family, Tyndale found himself treated with every courtesy. But in front of him a black cloud loomed, which was soon to burst over his head. For Tyndale was about to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and his betrayal was to be fraught with all the odium of the treachery of friendship.

Thus it happened that a certain Henry Phillips, a messenger from England, came as if by accident to the little

town of Antwerp, where he made the acquaintance of Tyndale. Quite unsuspecting any plot, Tyndale behaved with much kindness towards his countryman, entertained him to dinner and supper, showed him the shops in the town, and talked to him upon many subjects. His good host, Poyntz, who was shrewder than the reformer, warned him against trusting his new friend too much; but Tyndale replied warmly that he was “an honest man, handsomely learned and very conformable.” Meanwhile Phillips was laying a deep plot by which he might hand the translator over to his foes. He had obtained authority for this purpose from the emperor at Brussels, and he now only waited for an opportunity to carry out his cowardly plan. Then came a day when Poyntz himself went from the town on business. At once Phillips completed his plans. Trading upon the friendship he had gained with Tyndale, he went to call upon him and begged him to lend him forty shillings, saying he had lost his purse that very morning. Only too glad to befriend his comrade, Tyndale handed him the money, “the which,” says one of his biographers, “was easy to be had of him, if he had it; for in the wily subtleties of this world he was simple and unexpert.” Then with the coins jingling in his pocket, and with the knowledge that Tyndale’s ruin was at hand, Phillips begged his friend to come out with him. The other readily agreed, only urging that his friend should be his guest and dine with him at any inn that he chose. In this unsuspecting way did the simple-hearted reformer walk into the trap which his enemies had laid for him:—

“Then said Phillips, ‘Master Tyndale you shall be my guest here this day.’ ‘No,’ said Master Tyndale, ‘I go forth this day to dinner and you shall go with me and be my guest, where you shall be welcome.’ So when it was dinner time, Master Tyndale went forth with Phillips;

and at the going out of Poyntz' house was a long narrow entry, so that two could not go in a front. Master Tyndale would have put Phillips before him, but Phillips would in no wise, but put Master Tyndale afore ; for that he pretended to show great humility. So Master Tyndale, being a man of no great stature went before ; and Phillips, a tall comely person, followed behind him, who had set officers on either side of the door . . . Phillips pointed with his finger over Master Tyndale's head down to him, that the officers . . . might see that it was he whom they should take." Thus was his ruin accomplished.

Once within the prison of Vilvorde the full meaning of the catastrophe came upon Tyndale, and he felt for a certainty that never again would liberty be his. His true friend, Poyntz, did all he could to procure the release of the scholar. He wrote long and earnestly to England, where his brother was in the service of Henry VIII. But all was useless. Cromwell himself was willing to help, but the king was resolved to take no action in the matter, and the reformer was thus left to languish in confinement. A year passed, and still his trial had not taken place. Yet even in this time of imprisonment and hardship Tyndale's brave nature remained calm and unsoured. Nothing could embitter a character so steadfast, and ere he quitted his prison for the last time he had won the hearts of his gaolers by his gentleness. Even when he was enduring the greatest inconveniences in his desolate cell, the letter which he wrote to the Governor, praying for greater comfort, was temperate and restrained. His possessions had been seized by the Procureur and he now begged that some of them might be sent to him, " a warmer cap for I suffer extremely from cold in the head . . . a warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin ; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings. . . . I wish also his permission to

have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark."

In 1536 his trial began. He was allowed to make his defence, but the end was clear from the beginning. Judgment was passed upon him, and as soon as the assent of Charles had been obtained, preparations were made to carry it out.

On an October morning, when the air was heavy with the scent of late autumn, Tyndale was led from his cell in the Castle of Vilvorde into the courtyard near by. There he was fastened to a stake, in the midst of faggots, and after life had been taken from him by strangling, his body was consumed with fire.

No fear was visible on his worn face as he met his doom. He had accomplished the work he had meant to carry out, and his heart was fixed with the steadfastness of one who is well satisfied.

To-day the memory of that life is half forgotten, but the fact that the Bible in its present version is substantially the same as the one which Tyndale translated, is a proof of the care and scholarship with which this old-time reformer carried out the labour to which he devoted his life, and for the sake of which he suffered martyrdom.

## THOMAS CRANMER

*"But I have lived, and have not lived in vain ;  
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,  
And my frame perish even in conquering pain ;  
But there is that within me which shall tire  
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire."<sup>11</sup>*

BYRON, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"

THE name of Cranmer is connected with every reign in the Tudor dynasty except that of Elizabeth. Born in 1489 when Henry VII. was on the throne, he rose into eminence under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and under Mary he suffered degradation and death as a martyr at the stake.

His character stands in bold relief to the stronger personalities of Wolsey and Cromwell. Lifted through a chance remark into favour at court, he found a life of publicity thrust upon him. Had he chosen, he would doubtless have preferred a quieter existence in some country retreat, which would have better suited a nature shrinking instinctively from strife. He was six years younger than Luther, but no greater contrast can be found than is afforded by the characters of these two contemporaries, each linked with the crisis of the Reformation. Luther was courageous to a point of recklessness ; Cranmer was full of hesitation, and though he earnestly desired to follow out his high ideals, his temperament made him reluctant to face opposition.

The facts about his birth and early life are only a matter of conjecture, and the first time that anything definite

is known of him relates to his days at Cambridge, where he belonged to the little knot of scholars engaged in eagerly pushing on the work of the New Learning, which was beginning to absorb the interest of Europe.

His knowledge and scholarship soon brought him university honours and he was made Doctor of Divinity and Lecturer in Divinity. Most of those who came to listen to the discourses of this thoughtful teacher went away impressed by the thoroughness with which he had grasped his subject, and the care with which he expounded it. Amongst scholars, Cranmer's name began to be known as that of a man of profound learning; but outside, in the busy world, which as yet troubled itself very little about matters of scholarship, he was still unknown.

But though Cranmer's first thought was given to study, he was not unaware of political events in the country. The subject of the divorce was everywhere the uppermost theme, and in everyone's mind was the thought: "Will the king put away Queen Catharine, and if so will he be doing what is right?" The question interested Cranmer, and he saw in it an opportunity for the universities of Europe to combine and give a decision. It was this idea, which he uttered among friends at a supper-party, which led to his final elevation. He had been driven from Cambridge by an epidemic, and for the time being he was staying at Waltham Abbey near London. Meanwhile the king happened to pass through Waltham, where he lodged for the night. Thus Cranmer accidentally met with two old friends, Gardiner and Fox, both of whom now held positions in the royal household. Pleased at this unexpected meeting, the three decided to have supper together at an inn. Then, when they were talking at their ease, the subject of the divorce was broached. Cranmer

mentioned his own opinion, that the king should consult the universities of Europe, who would “discern the truth more clearly than Rome.” This was a new suggestion and it stuck in the minds of the two courtiers, one of whom afterwards remarked upon it to Henry himself. Henry seized upon the notion with avidity. Here was a way out of the difficulty which troubled him so sorely, and nothing would satisfy him but that Cranmer should be brought in hot haste to the palace. Instead of being flattered by the summons, Cranmer was filled with regret and even alarm. He was forty years old, and he felt that he was unfitted for the intriguing life of a court. Moreover he loved his books, and he foresaw that he would now have to lay aside his studies if he were to be plunged into the turmoil of polities.

But once Henry had conceived the idea that Cranmer could help him over the vexed question, he was determined that he should do so. Cranmer’s pliant disposition was no match for the king’s resolute energy, and before the scholar of Cambridge had fully realised what had happened he was definitely pledged to writing out a proposition which should be placed before all the Continental universities. The appeal failed to produce any result and thus Henry was once more thrown back upon Rome. But in the meantime he had perceived in Cranmer a man of learning and distinction, whom he could easily mould to his will. He resolved to advance him in the Church, and thus tighten his hold on one who could work out the royal will. In 1532 Cranmer was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and henceforward Henry congratulated himself on having found so easily a primate who was openly in favour of the divorce, and could be trusted to do what the sovereign ordered him. The news of his advancement brought little pleasure to Cranmer; it was an

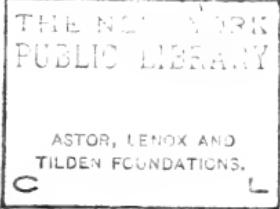


Thomas Cranmer

G. Fliccius

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Photo W. A. Mansell & Co.



honour that he had never coveted, but now that it was forcibly thrust upon him he could not do less than accept it. A sense of fear troubled his sensitive mind, a fear that would have been deepened could he have seen whither the acceptance of the office would in the end lead him.

Meanwhile, impatient at the Pope's endless delays, Henry married Anne Boleyn secretly, in 1533 ; after which, upon the advice of Cromwell, he declared through the ecclesiastical court of which Cranmer was the head, that the marriage with Catharine was invalid and her daughter, the Princess Mary, illegitimate. Thus was kindled in the heart of the princess the hate which was to bring Cranmer in his declining years to the stake.

Henry had not been mistaken in his judgment of the new archbishop. Cranmer readily fell in with the plans the monarch laid before him. He upheld the Act of Supremacy passed in 1534, and the next year he sat in judgment upon Sir Thomas More, reluctantly condemning him to the Tower for denying the king the title which this Act had given him. Personal feeling led Cranmer in the direction followed by the reforming party, and he willingly supported Cromwell in his policy during the years 1536 to 1539, in which the monasteries met with their downfall. His own marriage had shown that he did not uphold the theory that the clergy should not marry ; but on this point he was forced to give way and put away his wife, in 1539, when Henry passed his Six Articles statute, one of the clauses of which forbade such alliances. On the other hand he took advantage of the king's inclination towards reform by ordering a chained copy of the Bible, based upon the versions made by Tyndale and Coverdale, to be placed in every church. This benefit was received with acclamation by the people, who saw in the act an

indication of the increase of religious freedom, and Cranmer's "Great" Bible became everywhere spoken of with reverence.

The end of Henry's reign found the struggle between the reformers and those of the old party so acute that it was clearly impossible that the two could hope to find a compromise. It was not difficult to see the direction which the views of the archbishop were taking; for every day saw him more and more definitely on the side of the reformers.

The accession of Edward VI. strengthened Cranmer's resolve. He took an active part in the work of drawing up the First Prayer Book of 1549, and it was under his authority that it was finally published. His pleasure in the reform was greater because it was also an opportunity in which he could indulge his real love for scholarship. It was a delight to him to formulate the faith of the Church in stately phrases, and if the spirit of the change appealed to his convictions, its literary aspect also contributed to his enjoyment. Meanwhile others of a more practical turn of mind were bewailing the sluggishness exhibited by many within the Church. Latimer, one of Cranmer's old friends, and a man of earnest and determined character, spoke strongly for more vigorous endeavour after holiness. He bent himself to exhorting the people with a zeal which far outdid that shown by Cranmer, whose natural inclinations were much more those of the student than of the active reformer. Latimer's shrewd eye saw that a very serious danger threatened the Church, the danger of men growing weary of the old order of things without becoming enthusiastic about the new. Were this to happen, then all unawares a state of lethargy would surely follow, and ere the Church had realised her misfortune she would find herself over-

taken by inertia. Against this danger Latimer preached day after day, till his brave personality and his assertive confidence drew disciples to his side, and helped many to adhere to the principles they held to be true. Cranmer, on the other hand, had but little power to touch the imagination of the people. His own character was not stable enough to inspire them, nor had his voice that convinced utterance which certainty creates. It was harder for him to face death than it was for a man with Latimer's splendid courage, and that in the end he suffered the severest penalty bravely, proves him to have been a hero at heart.

The sun which had shone upon Cranmer sank with the death of Edward VI., and the night of his ruin set in when Mary came to the throne, bringing in her heart strong hatred for the Reformation movement, and a definite antipathy towards Cranmer. There were three reasons for her dislike of the archbishop. First, he had been an open partisan of the divorce of Catharine; it was his voice that had pronounced her doom, his voice that had declared the Princess Mary illegitimate, his hand that had crowned Anne Boleyn. Secondly, he had taken part in the infamous plot by which Lady Jane Grey had endeavoured to usurp the throne of Mary. Thirdly, he belonged to the reforming party. With three such charges marked against him in Mary's memory, there was little chance for Cranmer to escape her vengeance.

But though Mary at once threw Cranmer into virtual confinement in the Tower, it was not for two years after her accession that the queen ventured to carry out her intentions regarding the archbishop. His trial was a matter that called for the exercise of great care. He had been appointed primate by the Pope before the final

breach between Henry and Rome ; his execution could not be compassed without caution.

The blow fell in 1554, when Latimer and Cranmer were both sent to Cambridge to dispute theology with Catholic divines. This appearance of treating them fairly, was however only a ruse : the execution of both was intended. It was not long before Latimer's sentence was carried out ; and in 1555 he went to the stake, still exhibiting that brave, undaunted temper of mind which all his life had distinguished him.

Meanwhile Cranmer's trial was put into the hands of Rome, and the Pope appointed representatives to try the case in England. Cranmer was now a man of sixty-six, and his judges might well have taken pity upon one whose years called for reverence. But no feeling of mercy sprang in their hearts as they looked at his wrinkled, sensitive face, and marked his stoop of age. He was declared guilty of heresy and degraded from his office. Every indignity was heaped upon him and he was tauntingly asked to recant. Full of nervous dread at the fiery death which otherwise awaited him, Cranmer faltered out the fatal words. He would recant. It was not the reply his enemies desired, for they were greedy for his death ; but they saw in the answer a means of prolonging the torment, which they meant should at last end in martyrdom. Time after time he was forced to repeat the phrase of recantation, and in no less than six documents he publicly declared his return to the Pope and the old system of worship. But the memory of Cranmer was not to go down to posterity as that of a coward. His better nature triumphed as the shadow of death grew darker round him. No pardon was in store for him ; his crimes were too great in the eyes of Mary ; in spite of his recantations he was sentenced to the stake. The

news of this fate awakened in his heart all that was best. The timidity which had hitherto always characterised his actions fled away. Now that shuffling was over he showed himself a man of no mean spirit, and in a mood of triumphant exultation he passed to the spot where the faggots were piled up for him. Yet ere he moved from the shadow of the Church of St Mary, where he had been forced to listen to a sermon preached upon his heresy, he turned to address the congregation. A hush fell suddenly, as the people leant forward to listen to what they expected would be yet another recantation. Instead, the archbishop exclaimed in a clear voice, which had in it a ring of decision that was new to it :

“ Now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life, and that is the setting forth of writings contrary to the truth, which here I now renounce and refuse as things written by my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death to save my life, if it might be. And, forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand therefore shall be the first punished ; for if I come to the fire, it shall be the first burnt.”

With this triumphant sentence upon his lips Cranmer moved towards the fiery death which awaited him, and soon he had paid the penalty demanded by the rancour of Mary. His death moved the people as no other martyrdom had yet done. Others, such as Latimer and Rowland Taylor, had stepped with more splendid courage to the sacrifice of their lives, but none created such sympathy as Cranmer’s death inspired. His recantations, his shrinking from pain, his nervous tremors, and his last noble conquest over all these, left an impression of a figure at once so human and so noble, so weak and yet so

strong, that a burst of sympathetic sorrow tore the hearts of the people, who found relief for their emotion in unrestrained admiration. Often inclined to compromise, often undecided, by his noble end Cranmer amply atoned for the vacillations of his life.

## JOHN KNOX

*"Here lyeth a man who, in his life never feared the face of man : who hath beene often threatned with dag and dager, but yitt hath ended his dayes in peace and honour. For he had God's providence watching over him in a speciall manner, when his verie life was sought."*

**I**N the history of Tudor times no figure stands out in greater relief than that of John Knox. His fiery personality and his autocratic manner resembled in many ways the temperament of Henry VIII. Had Knox been born to the throne he would doubtless have followed out a policy as distinct and vigorous as ever Henry conceived, and in the matter of imposing his will upon others he would not have shown himself a whit less imperious. But birth placed Knox in a very different position. Born in 1505, the son of obscure Scottish parents, his standing was far removed from royal prestige, and any eminence to which he afterwards attained was entirely due to his own efforts.

As a boy, his unmistakable ability made itself early apparent ; and though he had sprung from the cradle of poverty, he studied at the University of Glasgow, and finally succeeded in establishing himself as a notary and afterwards as a private tutor, near Haddington. Several years passed by during which Knox showed himself deeply interested in all matters concerning the Church, yet for the most part he still pursued the calm round of his daily work, unaware of the great change which was shortly to take place in his life. It was now 1545, forty years since

his birth. The fashion of his life seemed established ; he seemed destined for an ordinary existence ; no one dreamt of seeing him spring into fame as the leader of a movement which should for ever affect the history of Scotland.

The first step in this unexpected direction was taken in 1546, when Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St Andrews, and the leader of the Catholic party in Scotland, was ruthlessly murdered. The news of the cruel deed roused strong feelings among the people. Some defended it ; others as hotly denounced it. Knox was among those who regarded it as a piece of justice, and he threw in his lot frankly with the reformers. His vivid personality and his natural power as an orator soon brought him into prominence, where he speedily won many to his side by his daring, eloquent tongue. Congregations began to ask eagerly for his services, and in 1547 he became a minister of the reformed religion.

But the moment of success in which he had triumphed was soon followed by disaster. Since the battle of Solway Moss and the death of James V. in 1542, the English king had been pressing hard upon Scotland ; and in 1547 the Castle of St Andrews, which had hitherto been held by the murderers of Cardinal Beaton, was forced to capitulate. Knox was involved in the misfortune, and he was sent as a galley slave to France. Such a position was intolerable to a man of so bold and undaunted a spirit ; his active mind was ever busy upon how to rid himself of chains. The torture which he suffered at this time burnt itself deeply into his mind, so that afterwards he wrote about it : “ How long I continewerd prisoneir, what torment I susteained in the galaiies, and what war the sobbes of my harte, is now no tyme to receat.”

His release, however, was at hand, and in 1549 he was set free through the intercession of the English Government. Thus he returned to England, where Edward VI. was now king.

Opposition and imprisonment had only strengthened his Scottish determination ; and he was more than ever resolved to maintain the cause of the reformers.

He was in the prime of life, a man of mature and earnest thought, and he now resolved upon an open and fiery crusade against the old order. He spared no one by his scathing tongue ; nevertheless crowds thronged to listen to his sermons. Even those who most hated him, felt the spell of his powerful presence, which held his congregation enthralled by its magnetism. The passion of the orator betrayed itself in his strong face. He lost all sense of himself in the fierce current of his words, and when his fiery eye swept his audience, and his voice rang with the emphasis of conviction, he seemed like a prophet inspired.

In 1549 he became one of the preachers licensed by the Government, and in this capacity he went to a church in Berwick. Here he stayed two years, after which he proceeded to Newcastle to further the work of the reformers in that city. Already Knox had made one memorable visit to the town in the preceding year, 1550, when he had bitterly denounced the Mass. After he had left his audience breathless with the tempestuousness of his address, he had added with characteristic anxiety, lest any should think that he had spoken fearlessly only because he felt himself under the protecting care of England : “ Let no man think that because I am in the Realme of England, that therefore so boldlie I speak aganis this abomination.”

By-and-by news of this strange preacher whose unguarded speech moved so strongly all who heard

it, came to the palace, and so to the king. Edward hastened to show favour to one who was giving expression to his own royal views. He himself went to hear him preach, and before the year 1551 closed he appointed him royal chaplain. Thus in four short years Knox had risen from comparative obscurity into fame and royal favour.

But the hopes of the reforming party, which had fastened themselves round the figure of the young king Edward VI., were suddenly and entirely blasted by his death and the subsequent accession of Queen Mary. Not daring to remain longer near a court so openly hostile, Knox fled to the Continent, where he finally drifted to Geneva, and so became acquainted with the Protestant reformer, Calvin. Flight only served to strengthen his convictions, and in his friendship with Calvin he found fresh stimulus for his efforts on behalf of reform. He determined not to risk a return to England till the fury of Mary had abated, and therefore he set about finding some work which would also afford him means of support for the time being. Frankfort had gathered together a little knot of English exiles, who like Knox had sought refuge in flight. These now begged him to become their minister, and after some deliberation he agreed to their request and went thither in 1554. But the following year discord arose in the congregation, some of whom were opposed to the more advanced views expounded by their leader. Upon this Knox renounced his charge, and returned to his friend, Calvin, at Geneva, and here he spent the next three years.

The news of the death of Mary and the accession of Elizabeth, roused him to hope for a return to favour. But he viewed with dissatisfaction some of Elizabeth's acts towards the Protestants, and scarcely was she settled on the throne when he gave vent to his discontent by

publishing a pamphlet, written probably towards the close of the year 1557, entitled *A Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. Never accustomed to mince his words, and smarting from the remembrance of Mary's ill-deeds, Knox recklessly declared that: "To promote a Woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion, or empire above any Realme, Nation, or Citie is repugnant to Nature and . . . the subversion of good Order, of all equitie and justice."

The ink on his pen was hardly dry after this denunciation, when the reformer prepared to return to England. But Elizabeth had been direly offended at the *Blast*. Moreover she was by no means prepared to admit lightly the reappearance of so turbulent a preacher and writer, and she therefore forbade his approach. Baffled and angry, Knox turned aside from his intention; but only for a time. Next year he resolved to be restrained no longer, and in 1559 he came to Scotland. Eleven years had gone by since he had been sent a prisoner from Scotland to France. In the meantime the little queen had been growing up, apart from her subjects, in the French court. Mary of Guise, her mother, had done all she could to further the Catholic cause in Scotland, but the general body of the people was by no means inclined to look upon her rule favourably. Unrest which had long simmered, seemed to be on the verge of pouring out in a hot flood of revolt. At this juncture Knox appeared, and instantly his powerful influence began to affect the cause of the reformers. He came fresh from acquaintance with Calvin, and brought with him the atmosphere of the Genevan leader. His appearance was the signal for an outburst of fresh enthusiasm, and under his strong leadership the struggle against Mary of Guise was carried on more violently than ever. Even Elizabeth was persuaded to join in the

fray, and though with her usual custom she was averse from showing herself strongly on one side or the other, political motives forced her to see that by supporting Scotland she would strike at France, and thus weaken the prospect of that intimate union between France and Scotland which the approaching womanhood of Mary, Queen of Scotland, seemed to forecast.

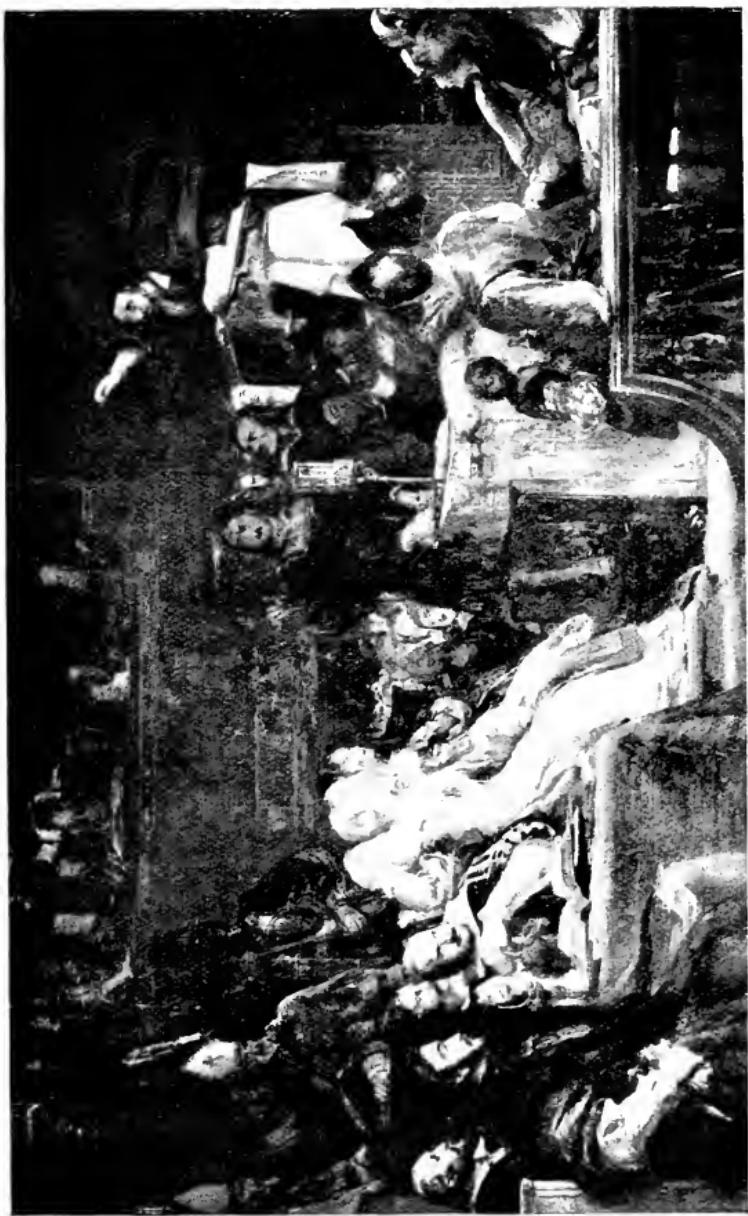
In the midst of this energetic struggle between the nobles of Scotland and the French party in the Government, Mary of Guise died. Her death paved the way for the triumph of the opponents she had tried so ardently to keep in check. Knox snatched at the opportunity, and urged on the reformers to swift and definite action. His keen eye saw that no moment was to be lost, if the hopes for which he had laboured so zealously were to be realised. Who could tell what the influence of the young queen might accomplish? If the reforming party were to have its will, it must have its supremacy established, speedily and securely.

For the most part the country was quite willing to follow out the way pointed by Knox, and in 1560 a Parliament met which abolished the power of the Pope, denounced the Mass, and accepted a Calvinistic Confession of Faith.

Never did a man in one short year accomplish more than Knox in the year 1559 to 1560. From his arrival in Scotland in 1559, till the Parliament of 1560, he had worked unceasingly to bring about the change he desired. It happened that his wish coincided with the wish of the Scots generally, and thus it became possible for him to see his scheme reach so sudden and so abundant a fruition. But although the transformation had been wrought with such swiftness, it was not the expression of a hastily-considered, ill-contrived plan. It was orderly and systematic

John Knox preaching before the Lords of the Congregation

Sir David Wilkie  
Photo W. A. Mansell & Co.



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ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

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in its foundation, and the fact that it sprang at once into finished form is the surest evidence that its germ had long been in existence. Thus what might seem to be a sudden transformation was in reality only a natural evolution. It concurred with the spontaneous desire of the people, and was based upon genuine religious motives. Its advent happened side by side with the English Reformation, but it was without that political significance which underlay the ecclesiastical policy adopted by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. The Reformation in Scotland drew the people together into one as no other event had done. The settlement had been voiced by themselves, and its stability was therefore secured before the arrival of Queen Mary brought the shock of opposition.

It was the year after the triumphant Parliament of 1560 when Mary returned to Scotland. Her coming was a challenge to Knox. If his own temper was imperious, Mary's was no less so. Two such strong wills could not take part in the government of affairs without a clash. From the first Knox showed hostility to a queen who was an open Catholic, and he took no efforts to conceal or soften his harsh opinion. On her side Mary displayed a tact which compels admiration; and she even listened patiently to the denunciations which the intrepid reformer aimed against her. Yet she quietly held to her own way and went upon the path she chose to tread. It may be that as the eagle eye of the reformer fell upon her, and saw beneath the frivolities of her nature a determination as deep as his own, there thrilled through him an emotion of admiration for one who in this point resembled himself, even though in nearly every other particular the two were as widely apart as the east and the west. But if such were ever the case, zeal soon swallowed up all other feeling, and it was with entire heartiness that Knox

declared “ Yf thair be not in hir a proud mynd, a crafty witt, and ane indurat hearte against God and his treuth, my judgment faileth me.”

On her side Mary’s interest was piqued by the personality of this uncouth preacher, who never condescended to grant her the merest civilities. She felt the spell of his character, which was naturally attractive to women. Had he shown himself ready to meet her advances she would doubtless have taken him into high favour, for she was at the same time attracted and repelled by his force; and if she scorned his denunciations, she also admired his intrepidity, which was at least equal to her own. More than once she granted him a private audience in which she tried to win his subservience. Just before her marriage to Darnley she summoned the preacher to her, and demanded the reason why he spoke so hotly against the match. But however she might fume, Knox remained unmoved, till at last she cried out vehemently : “ I have borne with you in all your rigorouse manner of speaking . . . yea, I have sought your favoris by all possible meanes. I offerred unto you presence and audience whensoever it pleased you to admonishe me and yitt I can nott be quyte of you. I avow to God I shal be anes revenged.” At this point the queen’s dignity forsook her and she burst into a flood of tears so that “ skarslie could Marnock, her secreat chalmerboy, gett neapkynes to hold hyr eyes drye for the teares, and the owling, besides womanlie weaping stayed her speiche.” In the midst of this tumult Knox remained unmoved, replying to the queen in so restrained and dignified a manner that at last she commanded him to pass from her chamber and wait for her among her ladies. The stern-faced preacher, in his sombre dress, must have looked oddly out of place as he stood amongst the bevy of richly robed ladies-in-waiting in the splendid audience hall of the

palace. No doubt a sense of the contrast forced itself also upon Knox, for as he looked around him he said earnestly : " O fayre Ladyes, how pleasing war this lyeff of youris, yf it should ever abyd, and then in the end that we myght passe to heavin with all this gay gear. But fyne upon that knave Death, that will come whither we will or not . . . and the seally sowll, I fear, shall be so feable that it can neither carry with it gold, garnassing, targatting, pearle, nor pretious stanes."

After the deposition of Mary in 1567, the Presbyterian system of doctrine was approved of by the new Parliament, which met under Moray, the regent for Mary's little son. The *Confession of Faith* which Knox had compiled had been formally adopted by the Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1564, and now this acceptance was confirmed by the law of the land. Thus Knox saw the accomplishment of the work he had taken in hand, and the man who in 1545 had been only a private tutor in Haddington, in 1567 saw the form of worship which had been drawn up by himself, adopted by the whole of the country of Scotland. If his eminence had been late in coming, when it once developed it had been extraordinarily rapid in reaching a culmination.

Henceforward his life was passed in comparative retirement. In 1572 he returned to his church in Edinburgh, and in the same year he died, at the age of sixty-seven. His death did not interfere with the continuance of the form of service which he had instituted. The *Liturgy* and the *Confession of Faith* which the Assembly had adopted in 1564 continued to be used from that date till the year 1645, when the *Directory of the Westminster Assembly* took its place. The chief literary merit of the *Liturgy* lies in the simplicity and directness of its language, which is well exemplified in the Exhortation appointed to

be read at the ordination of a minister: "Walk in simplicity and pureness of lyfe, as it becumethe the trew servant and ambassadour of the Lord Jesus. Usurpe not dominioune nor tyrranicall impyre over thy brethrein. Be not dis-couraged in adversity, bot lay before thyself the example of the Profeits, Apostles and of the Lord Jesus, quho in thair ministry susteaneed contradicition, contempt, persecutioun and deyth."

In the old graveyard of St Giles (a site long since built over), the body of John Knox was laid to rest. Many came to see the burial of this hot-tongued preacher who had exercised so potent a spell. Rich and poor stood side by side as the last offices were done for one whose life had been an eager, restless service on behalf of the cause of religion. And above the crowd rose the words of the Regent Morton : "Here lies one who neither flattered nor feared any flesh."

One last characteristic utterance was disclosed by his will : "Nane I haif corrupted, nane I haif defraudit, merchandise haif I not maid." The truth of the assertion is maintained by the fact that in spite of his opportunities for enriching himself at the expense of others, Knox left behind him for his wife and daughters only little more than £1500. His life, when contrasted with that of his fellow-reformers suchas Luther or Tyndale, appears singularly free from persecution. His imperious will carried all before it, and helped by the ready aid of his countrymen generally he was enabled to carry through a thorough reformation in the space of a few short years. None who heard him came away untouched by his magnetic force, and even among those who felt no warmer feeling towards him, his entire fearlessness, and his high principles, won for him universal respect and esteem. In him the identity of Scotland is first definitely expressed. He re-

presents the nation ; a nation separated once and for all from France ; a nation determined on maintaining the right to worship in the way most pleasing to itself ; a nation allied to England by the tie of a common Protestant faith, and thus made ready for the closer tie, which in future years should bind the two countries together in a common bond for the good of both.

## Phase III—The Sea

### CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

*"So they sat pondering much and spake no word,  
Till all the landward noises died away,  
And, midmost now of the green sunny bay,  
They heard no sound but washing of the seas  
And piping of the following western breeze,  
And heavy measured beating of the oars."*

WILLIAM MORRIS

THE thread which linked Columbus with England during his lifetime was so meagre and slight that he can scarcely be said to have a place at all among the characters who illumined England during the time of the Tudor sway. His magnificent enterprises, undertaken when Henry VII. was on the throne, produced hardly any effect upon our own country ; England was still deaf to the call of the sea. Other European countries had become suddenly and keenly alive with the sea-spirit, but amongst English people the emotion was curiously slow in awakening. Safe within their insular seclusion, it was not till the middle period of Tudor times that the race began to exhibit any excitement in matters of exploration and sea enterprise.

But if the tie which in his lifetime bound Columbus to England, was slender, circumstances after his death transformed it into a strong cable. How much his discovery was to mean to Englishmen was not then apparent ; and little did the explorer imagine, when he set off on his

perilous journey in search of a new world, that his voyage would in later years affect the English more nearly than any other nation of the globe. Yet so it was to be, and in spite of his alien nationality, the bond which unites Columbus to the history of Tudor times thus became indissoluble.

By birth Columbus was a Genoese and came of a seafaring stock. At the age of fourteen he made his first voyage, and from that moment his love for the sea grew steadily. Voyage after voyage he went, learning each time greater seamanship, and becoming well inured to the hardships of ocean life. His imagination meanwhile was busy with dreams of a world not yet discovered. Granting that the world was round, then by going farther and farther west the east would at last be reached, he reasoned. Moreover, it was hardly possible that such a vast tract of water should be without land of any kind. The more Columbus pondered the idea, the more probable the existence of such land seemed, till he burned with a desire to set off to test his theory.

His conviction at last became so strong that he determined to seek the support of a monarch willing to fit out a vessel for the enterprise. Patriotism induced him to offer his proposals first of all to Genoa ; but no encouragement was to be got from this quarter. Nothing daunted, he approached John II. of Portugal, in whose service he had already sailed. John, however, after listening to the plans urged by Columbus, sent out a private expedition, which failed ; whereupon the king meanly refused to assist any further projects. Spain was the next hope of Columbus, but fearing disappointment here, he at the same time sent his brother Bartholomew to plead his cause at the court of Henry VII. For a long time the negotiations in either country hung in the balance. Ferdinand was bitterly

opposed to the scheme, but his queen, Isabella, was more far-seeing. Henry of England, too, seemed inclined to favour the idea, but both countries hesitated to take the plunge. Eight precious years slipped by, and though bitterly disappointed at the delay Columbus was still as persistent as ever. Failure had again and again put his patience to the test, but his spirit rose bravely above every trial. His friends at the Spanish court were meanwhile daily persuading Isabella on his behalf, and in 1492 their efforts were rewarded. Ships were to be given, even if the queen had to pledge her jewels to raise the sum needed for their equipment.

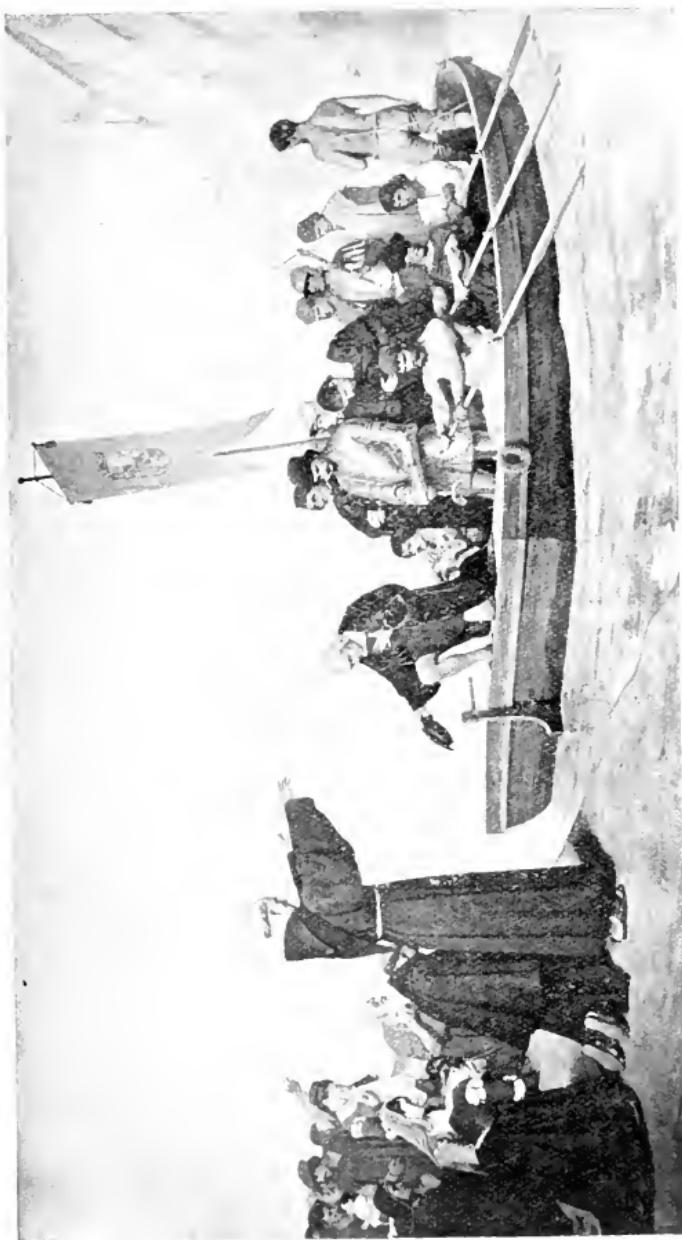
This generous decision overwhelmed Columbus with joy, and eager with expectation he sailed off on his memorable voyage in August 1492. Three little ships, the biggest less than a hundred tons, composed the whole of his "fleet"; but to Columbus, after his years of waiting, each was a treasure. Let him have the ships, however small, and there was nothing that could daunt his buoyant expectations.

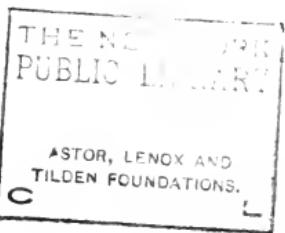
For three months the little craft sailed onwards, and still the sailors saw round them nothing but the cold breakers of the ocean. The courage of the crews had long ago vanished; mutiny threatened, and nothing but the indomitable boldness of Columbus, his vigilance and his splendid seamanship, saved the enterprise from coming to a disastrous end. Then came a glorious day when land was really sighted, and on Friday, 12th October 1492, the mariners landed on a new shore, never before trodden by Europeans. This was the island of San Salvador, now known as Watling Island, one of the Bahama group, which thus won the renown of being the first discovered portion of the New World, that had for so long hung as a hazy uncertainty in the dreams of

Departure of Columbus on his First Voyage to America

A. Gisbert

Photo Lacoste





Columbus. From here the explorers sailed to Cuba and Hayti, and after touching at one or two lesser islands they turned their way homeward and so reached Spain in March 1493. A magnificent reception awaited the explorer. He was greeted with almost regal state by the gratified king and queen, and the people generally vied with one another in heaping praise upon him. The islands which he had discovered were wrongly supposed to be part of India, which was then thought to be a vast continent of almost measureless extent. This error is still maintained in the name "West Indies," which was given to that part of the New World first touched upon by the travellers.

The warmth of his welcome was naturally pleasing to Columbus, but soon he was impatient to be off again, penetrating other new lands. On the 25th of September, of the same year in which he had returned, he departed on a second enterprise. But though on this and on each of his two succeeding voyages he prosecuted his discoveries farther, he never again experienced another reception like that which had crowned his first voyage. Powerful enemies sprang up at court and he rapidly declined in favour with the king, so that in spite of his wonderful achievements, he was in abject poverty at the time of his death in 1506. But if he died in miserable circumstances Columbus died also in the happiness of having carried out a noble scheme to a splendid end. Poverty could affect very little a mind so lofty, nor could the pangs of hunger terrify one who had conquered such anguish of mind as he had known in those eight dreary years of waiting.

## SEBASTIAN CABOT

*"We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea."*

COLERIDGE

THE important and magnificent enterprises of Columbus fired the spirit of one who by residence at least was more nearly connected with England. Sebastian Cabot, the famous son of John Cabot, himself an intrepid explorer, was born at Bristol, or at any rate passed there some of his earliest years.

In his lifetime Sebastian enjoyed an eminence which contrasts oddly with the miserable conditions under which Columbus spent his last days. He was wealthy ; he enjoyed the favour of monarchs ; he commanded the respect of the entire body of men just beginning to be keenly interested in the unknown lands across the sea. It is a question, however, whether Sebastian Cabot really deserves all the glory and honour which has since fallen to his share. His father, John Cabot, whose name in history is much more shadowy than that of his son, has in many ways more claim to renown. It was he who commanded the famous expedition of 1497, and though his son Sebastian probably had also a place in the company it was one subsidiary to that occupied by the elder Cabot.

Whether Sebastian Cabot actually belongs by birth to England or not is an undecided question. He seems himself to have given the honour to both England and Italy ; for he told one friend he was born in England, at Bristol, and afterwards taken to Venice ; while to another friend

he emphatically declared that he had been “born in Venice but brought up in England.” As a matter of fact he was often inaccurate in his statements, and he probably took advantage of his connection with two countries to pass himself off as an Englishman to Englishmen, and as a Venetian to Venetians. Nevertheless in 1512, when he accepted a post from the hand of the Spanish king, he was registered as “Sebastian Caboto, Englishman.”

News of the exploits of Columbus had at last roused the emulation of Henry VII., and he now listened favourably to the schemes propounded by John Cabot. His interest took the shape of practical help, and in 1496 he made it possible for the Cabots and their adherents to set off on a voyage of discovery. In August 1497 the explorers were back, bringing with them tidings of a strange and wonderful coast where, despite the season of the year, there were to be seen “monstrous heaps of ice swimming in the sea,” while the days were so long that it seemed “in manner continued daylight.” No human beings had been sighted by Cabot though he declared that he had coasted along the shore for some three hundred leagues. But he found evidences of human occupation in the gins and traps set to ensnare wild animals. He also observed an abundance of fish in the waters, from which he sagaciously deduced that there might be profitable commerce in this commodity. The unknown land thus discovered by Cabot was probably Nova Scotia. He may too have skirted the coasts of Labrador, though most likely not to the extent he himself indicated in his statement of “three hundred leagues.” However this may be, the glory of first touching upon the shore of the North American continent belongs to him. With what eager eyes the mariners must have gazed upon the indented coast which lay before them! Sebastian no doubt was among them, noting the

magnificent blocks of ice in the waters, the swarms of fish, the rich, virgin shores along which they sailed. The marvel of it all must have sunk with startling intensity into the hearts of that little company of sailors, gazing for the first time on land never before seen by European. In after years, jealous Bristol merchants opposed a similar expedition, suggested by Sebastian, on the ground that he "had never been there himself." This accusation is probably incorrect ; both by his own statement and by the letters-patent granted by Henry VII. to Cabot and his sons at the time when the vessels first sailed, it appears that Sebastian accompanied his father on this great expedition. And though the position he then occupied was no doubt one of very minor importance, still his presence on board the exploring vessel is almost certain.

Meanwhile the adventurers returned to Bristol, where they were greeted with the wildest joy. The streets were filled with people who could not restrain their enthusiasm. Shouts and cheers filled the air, and not a person but was a-tiptoe to catch a glimpse of the great captain. The sea-spirit was at last beginning to waken in the country, and the thought that English ships had navigated foreign waters roused the nation to delirium. "The Venetian, our countryman," wrote Pasqualigo, "is returned. . . . His name is Zuan Cabot and he is styled the Great Admiral. Vast honour is paid him ; he dresses in silk, and the English run after him like mad people." For a time John Cabot enjoyed being feted by the enthusiastic English, but before long the craving for further adventure rose in his true sailor heart. In 1498 he was again off on another hazardous voyage, during which he went as far along the American coast as Cape Hatteras, and possibly even touched at Florida. He returned in the autumn of the same year in which he had set out, but what happened

to him afterwards is unknown. He drops completely out of the history of the time, leaving the only conclusion that death must have ended his career about this date.

From this point the fame of Sebastian stands alone. Separated from that of his father his history is neither so interesting, nor so distinguished by genius. One of his critics, Henry Stevens, has observed that “Sebastian Cabot minus John Cabot = O.” But granting that a good deal of the renown which tradition has associated with the name of Sebastian belongs really to that of John Cabot, the statement that Sebastian equals naught is still too sweeping. His long connection with the Spanish Government, under whom he held the position of Master Pilot, is at least some proof of his genuine capability. He lacked the genius of his parent, but he was possessed of shrewd cleverness ; he may not have had the soul of an explorer, but he had the clear brain of the maritime expert.

At the time when Henry VIII. was beginning his reign, Ferdinand of Spain, who had been interested by the rumours about Sebastian, made overtures to attract him into his service. Three years later his offers were accepted, and Cabot became Pilot Master of Spain.

In 1521 an attempt was made by Wolsey to persuade Sebastian to return to England to take share in an expedition westward. But the negotiations at the time came to nothing. Under Edward VI. the proposals were renewed. On this occasion they met with success, and from the State papers of the year 1547 it is evident that Cabot held an official post, in which he is described by Hakluyt as “Sebastian Cabota, Grand Pilot of England.”

His absence from Spain at first roused no comment from Charles, who still maintained him in his pay, but in 1549 he wrote, urgently demanding his return. To this the English replied courteously that they had nothing to

do with detaining Cabot ; he was free to go if he chose, but that he refused to quit the country. So for a second time he became established in Bristol, where he enjoyed the favour of the king and received from him many and generous rewards. From this date till his death in 1557 he lived in England, and thus the opening and the closing years of his life became intimately connected with the west-country town of Bristol.

During the ten years which elapsed between Cabot's return to England and his death, he was busy in supervising mercantile affairs. His personality must have been one of great charm, for he was sought after with enthusiasm by men of varying dispositions. More than one commercial dispute was settled peaceably through his intervention, and the energy with which Charles entreated his return is sufficient proof of the high esteem in which he was held by that monarch. The intrepidity and enterprise which had distinguished the character of his father were lacking in his own, but he undoubtedly rendered valuable service to the countries to which he gave his allegiance. And though perhaps his career, shorn of the romantic glory which crowns deeds of exploration, may appear colourless by the side of the more dashing histories of Columbus and John Cabot, or of the later Elizabethan seamen, yet he deserves to stand out in history as the Master Seaman of his day, a prominent figure at a moment when the mystery of the ocean was first beginning to be investigated.

## SIR JOHN HAWKINS

Paet se monn ne wāt,  
pe him on foldan fægröst limþep,  
hū ic earmcēarig iscealdne sā  
winter wunade wræccan lāstum  
winemēgum bidroren,  
bihongen hrimgicelum ; haegl  
scurum flēag.<sup>1</sup>

*Lo, that man never knows  
Who stays at home in peace,  
The hardships of the icy sea,  
The torment of the hail,  
The biting of the icy blast,  
The loneliness and gloom  
Which fill each sailor's heart,  
Bereft of friends and home.*

**I**N England the passion for ocean adventure had been slow in developing, and although the country itself seemed designed by nature to foster a race of sailors, the craving for enterprise upon the ocean appeared less keen than the instinct for commercial and agricultural development. But the Norsemen who had come to burn and harry in the far-back days, before the Conqueror, had not passed away without leaving behind them a heritage for their descendants in the island they had troubled. The sea-spirit was only slumbering ; soon it would awaken, and once awakened it would show itself to be throbbing with giant power. The blood of those whose forefathers had faced the terrors of the sea, once it was stirred, would thrill with hot excitement. Nothing was needed but the incentive, and this was to come in the days of Elizabeth under the guise of the Reformation.

It may seem at first sight difficult to understand how it was that these two great movements should have exercised so tremendous an influence upon each other. They appear to be aiming at such different goals ; to be based

<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Saxon Poem (*The Seafarer*).

upon such different foundations. The sea-spirit brought in its train, slavery ; was this the outcome of the Reformation ? The Reformation was built upon the supremacy of the English sovereign, how was this connected with the freedom which sea enterprise implies ?

Both questions have their answer. Slavery was undoubtedly one of the principal outcomes of the marine expeditions under Elizabeth, and it was sanctioned by those who upheld the Reformation. Those who were first responsible for its introduction saw no moral reason against it. The idea of its cruelty and inhumanity had not occurred to them. It was a profitable means of trading, and for the moment the other issues involved had not yet suggested themselves. The name of Hawkins has always upon it the blot of the introduction of the traffic in human beings, but the odium of the accusation is lessened by remembering the circumstances of the day in which he flourished. But there is another question. How was it that an autocratic movement, religious in its effect, but nevertheless established upon a basis of kingly supremacy, should countenance a spirit of adventure, leading of necessity in the direction of independence and freedom ? Two reasons supply the answer. In the first place the men who ventured forth on discoveries were staunchly Protestant. They represented the new order struggling against the old ; they stood for the overthrow of foreign control and the establishment of national supremacy. In this last fact the second reason is supplied. Patriotism was at its height : the old ideal which taught absolute submission to a head in Rome was not really overturned : it had only altered its direction. The instinct was just as strong, only now it was directed inwards instead of outwards. Whereas formerly the signal for obedience had come from Rome, it now came from the

English throne ; the new ideal was only the old ideal in a new dress. This being so, even so autocratic a sovereign as Elizabeth, would have been indeed blind, if she had put out her hand to stop an enterprise, which could only redound to the honour of her name and at the same time strengthen the stability of the throne. Protestantism and the sea-spirit both meant an increase of the sovereign's power. The first of these was controlled directly by the monarch ; and as long as patriotism continued in such vigour, the second fell naturally under the sway of the Crown. With two such bulwarks to guard her, Elizabeth had little to fear from foreign interference. It is noteworthy, too, that the great struggle which finally decided the future of England's naval power turned sharply upon religious issues. The battle of the Armada was essentially a battle fought on behalf of two contending faiths. In this struggle a brave part was taken by Sir John Hawkins, who long before this event had won renown by his exploits at sea. Hawkins was the second son of a sea captain who belonged to Plymouth, from whence he set off more than once on an exploring adventure. His son inherited his passion for the ocean, and ere he was out of his teens he had already been drawn by the magnetic call of the seagull, across the grey billows that stretched between England and the Canaries. His birth had taken place in the year 1532, and his early manhood spent at a time when the naval prospects of England, which under Henry VIII. had begun to assume some importance, had sunk into degeneracy. Mary's outlook upon life had been coloured by her fanaticism. "She failed to grasp the large issues of statesmanship, and so while she was too busy burning heretics to look to the police of the seas, her father's fine ships rotted in the harbour ; her father's coast forts were deserted or dismantled ; she lost Calais ; she lost the

hearts of her people in forcing them into orthodoxy ; she left the seas to the privateers ; and no trade flourished save what the Catholic Powers called piracy."

But if through Mary's neglect the navy were allowed to grow lax and ineffective, "piracy" was distinctly in the ascendant. The hatred of the Inquisition forced many bold and resolute spirits to sea from whence they might openly fling defiance ; buccaneering became the accepted occupation of all who had a spice of daring in their nature. So that if the royal fleet were sinking into decay, a new "piratical" fleet, manned by sailors of the stoutest courage, was already afloat, ready to supplement the regular ships in time of need ;—which emergency did indeed come later. But for the "pirates" the story of the Armada would probably have been very different. As it was, at the time when Hawkins reached maturity, "every other trade was swallowed up or coloured] by privateering." By birth Hawkins belonged to a well-to-do middle-class family, who were well known in the place where they lived. In this atmosphere of comfortable middle-class life, in a town blown upon by the stinging salt breezes, in a home where stories of the sea were constantly being told, the boy grew up from childhood to young manhood. Through the favour of a distant relation he came in contact with life at court about the year 1561, when he was thus twenty-nine years of age. Elizabeth was always ready to take notice of any young man who had pleasing manners, and Hawkins soon won her favour by his stories of what he had done and what he meant to do in the future. Already he saw himself at the head of a great naval force, a man of fame and distinction. Elizabeth laughed at his dreams, but his ambition pleased her, and with her aid he bought a vessel of some 400 tons. Then with a company of "a hundred

tall soldiers," besides his working crew, he set off on his great expedition. This was probably in 1561, which thus became the year of his first great voyage.

At sea Hawkins showed himself in the best light. He bent himself sternly to business, and instead of idling away his time in dreams, he set about conducting his expedition on lines calculated to make it successful not only as a naval enterprise, but also as a commercial speculation. In the Canaries he heard tell of the trade there was to be done in negroes among the "Spanish settlements in Espanola." This was enough for Hawkins. He was himself intimately acquainted with the Guinea Coast and knew how easily such a cargo could be obtained. Here was a means by which profit and adventure might be combined. The idea of the injury he would be doing the negroes did not cross his mind ; he thought only of achieving the object for which he had gone abroad. The question, too, of the resentment that his action might rouse in Spain either did not occur to him, or if it did, he dismissed it with a comfortable assurance, similar to that which Sir Arthur Champernowne had once put forward in a letter to Elizabeth, in regard to some Spanish ships, which had been taken by questionable means : "Great pity it were such a rich booty should escape her Grace. But surely I am of that mind that anything taken from that wicked nation is both necessary and profitable to our commonwealth." In any case Hawkins returned to England full of plans for his new expedition. In 1562 he again set sail. This time he had in his command three ships, all of them being what would nowadays be reckoned mere cockleshell boats. The largest was only a hundred and twenty tons, the smallest but forty. Nevertheless the expedition went well, and at Sierra Leone three hundred negroes were captured, and easily disposed of in the West

Indies. The slave trade was thus begun and with pockets well filled with the profits of his traffic Hawkins returned home.

Once in England he made his way to the queen. His expedition had succeeded, and he was eager to tell her that at least some part of his dreams at which she had laughed indulgently had been realised. Elizabeth received him graciously. The news of the capture of the slaves did not alarm her ; so far was she from seeing in it anything objectionable that she offered to lend Hawkins one of her own vessels, the *Jesus*, a ship carrying some seven hundred tons, with which to go on a second and similar journey. Only too delighted with the royal favour he had won, Hawkins set about making preparations for his second great slave-capturing voyage. Autumn arrived, everything was ready, and in October 1564 he once more sailed away from England. Meanwhile the news of his exploits began to be noised abroad till it came to the ears of Philip II. The Spanish king knitted his brows with annoyance and perplexity at the message : so far he had had nothing to fear from the rivalry of the English on the far-off seas, but now this Hawkins ! Who could tell how far the challenge might go, once it had been flung down ? and what about those colonies planted abroad with such zeal by the Spaniards ? If once the marauding Englishman got a hold there, might he not carry everything before him, even the loyalty of Philip's over-sea subjects ?

A message to Elizabeth, however, brought no relief, and meanwhile Hawkins was at large on the ocean.

His second expedition to the West Indies was even more successful than the first, and its leader became the hero of the hour. His appetite thus whetted, he prepared to achieve yet greater glory, and in 1567, in spite of remonstrance from Spain, he again set sail. But by this

time Philip's blood was up. If the audacious Englishman intended to persist in his raids, then means of checkmating him must be found. Consequently orders that he must be stopped were sent in every direction, and the Spanish officer, Alvarez de Baçan, was packed off in definite pursuit. Near the coast of Mexico disaster fell upon the intrepid Hawkins. His food supplies ran short, and to prevent famine he was obliged to put some of his men ashore. At this critical juncture the entrance to the harbour San Juan d'Ulloa was cut off by de Baçan, and the English found themselves caught in a ring of enemies. The situation was desperate, and it was only by making a bold dash that Hawkins and some of his men escaped in his two smallest boats, the *Judith* and the *Minion*. In this fashion they at last came to London in 1569. But though Hawkins was safe himself, his heart burned at the thought of the unfortunate men he had been forced to leave behind him in Mexico. He pictured them suffering the bitterest anguish, and he resolved to set them free. To do this he entered upon a daring scheme, pretending that he was in favour of the conspiracy got up by some Catholics in Spain in favour of an invasion of England, the deposition of Elizabeth, and the coronation of Mary, Queen of Scotland. His scheme was approved of by Elizabeth's ministers, who saw in the reckless plan a means of obtaining the secrets of the plots on behalf of Mary, which had long unsettled England. With extraordinary ingenuity Hawkins set to work, and so succeeded in his endeavour that he obtained not only information of the greatest value to Elizabeth, but promised liberty for his men, a Spanish title for himself, and money to repair the boats which had been so badly handled. This was more than even he had dared to hope for in his most sanguine moments. His men were to be set free ; he had money

in his pockets ; he was a peer of Spain ; and the key to the Spanish conspiracy was in his possession. Through the information he had won from Spain, under the pretence of friendship, the Ridolfi plot was frustrated before it had time to be put into execution, and with this danger past, Elizabeth's throne was securer than ever it had been. Directly afterwards the Dutch, under William the Silent, aided by Protestant adventurers from England and France, made a strenuous and successful resistance against the attacks of the Duke of Alva, who in 1573 was forced to retire to Spain, completely defeated.

But if in reply to the treachery of Hawkins, the anger of Spain for a time was not openly directed against England, it was only because this wrath was simmering. By-and-by it would overflow ; and it behoved a wary country to be ready for the approach of that moment. The crisis came in 1588, though the signs had been long before apparent. Nevertheless Elizabeth, with her miserable and inveterate policy of hesitation, would scarcely allow any preparations to be made till the enemy had actually set sail. She forbade provisions to be loaded ; she withheld the money necessary for repairs ; she refused to allow some of her finest ships to be put in order for action. Her conduct exasperated the commanders, who saw that every moment was precious : "Awake, Madam," wrote Howard fiercely, "Awake for the love of Christ and see the villainous treasons round about you." But Elizabeth was hard to awaken when it was a matter of money and action, and it was well for England that she had a band of hardy seafarers, eager for any adventure, and accustomed to the hardships of the ocean. Meanwhile the great ships of Spain were already bearing down upon the Channel. Outwardly England's doom looked imminent. Her only hope lay in the courage and patriotism

of her sailors, and in the fact that the Spanish admiral, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, was utterly incompetent, and had only been thrust into his post, against his will, by the ill-advised insistence of Philip.

But before long the condition of the two navies was reversed, and it was the doom of Spain that hung in the air. The English had allowed their foe to enter the Channel as far as Plymouth, and now they were in pursuit. For a week, encounters with loss to the Spaniards took place daily. High winds and rough seas completed the work, and the attempt to sail back to Spain round the north of Scotland proved utterly disastrous. Out of the fleet which had borne down upon England with such superb scorn only a tattered remnant ever again reached Spain. The invasion had hopelessly failed. Protestantism had held its own and amply vindicated itself. Both sides had fought with a profound sense of the religious cause of the struggle. Both claimed to represent the right; and both were entirely sincere. Thus the triumph of England was not only a triumph for seamanship but a triumph for Protestantism. The tie between the sea and the Reformation was stronger and more subtle than ever. Hawkins, who had taken an active part in the engagement under Lord Howard of Effingham, was knighted as a reward for his services. But his new honour did not weaken his passion for the sea. Now that war no longer claimed him he went off again on cruising expeditions. In this capacity he served as vice-admiral under Drake, in 1595, on a voyage to the West Indies. He never returned to England, for three months later, in November, he died from fever off the coast of Porto Rico. The whole of his life from the time he was twenty years of age had been spent in sea enterprises. He had ventured forth in tiny craft, tossed up and down without end upon

the tumultuous wave. Often when dark, sullen night had brooded over the ocean he had listened to the roar of wind and tide, and often the dawn of day had found him still watching the storm, which gave no sign of abatement. And so the sea burial which at last he found, marked a fitting climax to a life devoted to expeditions of daring and hardship.

## SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

*“One Francis Drake ! a Titan that had stood,  
Thundering commands against the thundering heavens,  
On lightning-shattered, storm-swept decks and drunk  
Great draughts of glory from the rolling sea.”*

ALFRED NOYES

THE number and brilliance of the names which adorned every calling in the days of Elizabeth seemed almost to indicate that Nature herself was busy making an effort to glorify this reign above all others. In learning, in the Church, in the State, figure after figure had sprung up, each an embodiment of genius. Now the sea was to play her part ; Hawkins had already brought glory to her name, but a greater was to follow.

Drake himself was nearly related to Hawkins, and as a boy he drank in eagerly the tales of daring about his intrepid relation. The spirit of adventure which was his by instinct, was thus fostered till it grew into a passion, which nothing save the sea itself could satisfy. He had, moreover, a natural tendency towards the new doctrines of the Reformation ; for his father, an avowed Protestant, living in Tavistock, had been obliged to withdraw to Kent to escape persecution for his religious opinions. Therefore in addition to Drake's instinctive inclination for the life of a sailor, he was attracted by that spirit of freedom, which moved so many of the reforming party to seek their fortunes at sea and incidentally diminish the power of Spain by robbing her on every possible

occasion. Spain represented the Pope and the Inquisition ; therefore she was looked upon as natural prey by the English, who glowed with fury at the thought of the tortures which some of their countrymen had already suffered at the hands of their inveterate foe. Once in the grip of the Spaniards, whose cruelty was notorious, no one was safe ; and no worse fate could be imagined than that of the man who fell into such clutches. Dread of the barbarities of Spain had rendered English trade on the High Seas almost impossible, and it was with a keen sense of this injustice that Drake broke boldly into waters which had so far been unstirred save by the ships of Philip.

His first expedition was made in the company of Hawkins, who was bound for the West Indies on his third voyage in pursuit of slaves. Hearing news of the undertaking, Drake, who must have been about twenty-six at the time, eagerly manned a brig and asked leave to accompany his relative. Permission was given, and full of excitement and delight Drake sailed in the little vessel, the *Judith*, which carried about fifty tons. But pleasure soon gave place to anxiety, for the expedition turned out ill. Hawkins was surprised by the Spaniards in the bay of San Juan d'Ulloa, where he lost most of his ships and nearly all his treasure. By dint of careful seamanship and hard fighting, Drake, in company with Hawkins, managed to bring his little boat safely out of the mêlée. But the escape had been managed with difficulty, and when they again reached Plymouth they brought with them many memories of desperate fighting and narrow escapes. Nevertheless Drake's passion for the sea was as strong as ever, and scarcely was he home before he was planning out a new expedition. This time he wisely determined to leave slave trading alone,

but he by no means intended to show a similar avoidance of the Spaniards themselves. His hatred of them was stronger than ever, and he desired nothing so much as an opportunity for an encounter in which he might take his revenge for the affair in the San Juan bay. “The King of Spain’s subjects,” says Fuller, “had undone Mr Drake, therefore Mr Drake was entitled to take the best satisfaction against the King of Spain.” Drake’s satisfaction was not a thing to be lightly reckoned, for he meant to exact full payment.

With this purpose in view he set about planning definite piratical expeditions. In 1570 and 1571 he returned to the West Indies, and on both occasions only sailed home after he had captured enough treasure to satisfy him for the moment. The following year he entered upon another voyage, lasting throughout a twelvemonth, from which he at last returned, leaving behind him more than one sacked and plundered city. The dread of his name was by this time beginning to cause nightmare among the Spaniards. They spoke with terror of this bold Englishman who had suddenly appeared upon their horizon, and in their fear and hatred they called him “the Drake,” *El Draque*, the serpent or devil. An unsuspected foe, he had swooped upon them with a suddenness that found them wholly unprepared for attack. Whether there was open hostility between England and Spain, they in those distant waters could not tell, but they complained that the English were plundering with all the rapacity of a time of warfare, and as they saw their shining bars of silver and gold placed cheerfully upon English barques, they gnashed their teeth and called helplessly upon Philip to come to their help. Meanwhile Philip was slowly drifting into an attitude of war against England; but the days of the Armada were still a long way off, and in the interval

there were several years in which Drake was to make his discoveries and to glut his marauding passion. It was the year 1577, ten years and more before the great Spanish fleet should bear down upon England, and at Plymouth, Drake was making ready to set out upon another and greater voyage than he had yet undertaken. The enterprise he had in his mind was one of great daring ; for it was nothing less than an intention to penetrate into those distant Pacific waters, which even the Spaniards had for long left untouched because of the danger of the passage.

Nothing daunted by evil reports of the difficulty of the way, Drake was now preparing to make the adventure. Nevertheless, in spite of his apparent nonchalance, he cast a careful eye over the provisions and equipments of the little fleet, which he was to lead on its hazardous journey. Five ships in all were under his care, the *Pelican* (afterwards renamed the *Golden Hind*), the *Elizabeth*, the *Marigold*, the *Swan*, the *Christopher*. Of these the largest was only a hundred tons ; the smallest a mere cockleshell boat, but fifteen tons in all. It seemed madness to risk the attempt, but yet Drake was resolved to try. The exact object of his journey was kept an entire secret, for he knew that if the Spaniards discovered it they would at once offer him severe opposition. But the secret was kept, and the idea that even "El Draque" would attempt so hazardous a journey, as the passage through the Straits of Magellan, never once entered the mind of Spain. Consequently beyond the Caribbean Sea no notice of his coming had been sent, and once he had passed the Straits there were none to oppose him on the farther coast of South America. Meanwhile Drake was quietly busy with his preparations, till at last all was ready. Then on a dull afternoon in November in the year 1577, the little

squadron of ships set off, and one by one there passed down Plymouth Sound the *Pelican*, the *Elizabeth*, the *Marigold*, the *Swan* and the *Christopher*. In September nearly three years later Drake was to re-enter the Sound, accompanied, it is true, by only one of the five ships with which he had started, but bringing the news of the success of an enterprise which no other Englishman had ever achieved, the enterprise of sailing completely round the world.

The inspiration for this great undertaking had been first aroused in Drake on his voyage to the West Indies in 1572. There he had gazed from the top of a chain of hills over the broad Pacific, and as he looked upon those waters "of which he had heard such golden reports, he besought Almighty God of his goodness to give him life and leave to sail once in an English ship in that sea." His plan had been there and then communicated to some of his men, who had warmly approved of the idea. Now the idea was being carried out ; Drake had set off on his great expedition, from which he would not return till he had encompassed the world.

During the three years which the voyage occupied there were many strange adventures and narrow escapes to be faced. Treachery on board ship was also to threaten, and swift and secure measures would have to be taken to preserve the faith of the crew. It was upon Thomas Doughty, a man who was no sailor, and whose presence among Drake's crew can hardly be explained, unless he was there as a blind to the Spaniards, that the suspicion of treachery fell. It was no time for delay ; a mutiny might any day follow, or the crews be delivered into the hands of Spain. Therefore from among the sailors a jury was hastily summoned, and Doughty was tried and found guilty. Drake himself undertook to bear

the whole responsibility of carrying out the sentence, and it is even asserted by some that he beheaded Doughty with his own hands, as the vessel stood off the coast of Patagonia, about a year from the time of leaving Plymouth.

The coming of El Draque was everywhere a source of alarm to the natives. If he passed by without dropping anchor they were "very joyful that we touched not with their coast." At other places where they landed with no intention of doing any injury, the people "rejoiced in our coming and in our friendship and in that we had done them no harm." The natural expectation was that the English would at least despoil them, and the poor Indians of South America were only too grateful if they were left unmolested by the strangers.

In the midst of winter storms Drake sailed boldly into the Straits of Magellan, which lie at the base of South America, between the mainland and Tierra del Fuego. It was a stupendous undertaking to diver his small craft down this tortuous passage in the midst of winter storms, yet by his courage and splendid seamanship he managed it safely in only seventeen days. Thus an English ship for the first time sailed the Pacific in the year 1578. After cruising up the west coast of South America and loading his ship with plunder, Drake turned homeward by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and so in 1580 he at last arrived back in England, the first English captain who had succeeded in circumnavigating the world. When he landed his praise was in everyone's mouth. Before his arrival he had long been given up for lost; and now, as the story of his strange adventures and his marvellous accomplishment became known, every town rang with excitement over his achievement and it formed the only subject about which anyone talked. Elizabeth herself smiled kindly on



Elizabeth visits Drake on board his Ship

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the great sea captain. She felt that Spain could afford to be robbed : England had already suffered at her hands and it was her enemy's turn to be despoiled. Drake had been guilty of extreme piracy, but there had been provocation enough to justify it. Moreover, the glory of his achievement flung such a glow of triumph over his deeds, that the cruelty and rapacity which were also not wanting, were for the moment overlooked or forgotten. Drake was the hero of the day, and he drank deeply of the praise he had so hardly won. Elizabeth herself dined on his ship and afterwards conferred upon him the reward of knighthood —an honour highly esteemed in those days. From this date till the time of the Armada, Drake was again busy with sea pursuits, incidentally inflicting many injuries upon the Spaniards, amongst whom the deadly terror of his name grew daily greater. By-and-by rumours of the Armada began to fill the air. Elizabeth was still full of hesitation, and still as averse as ever from opening a campaign. She therefore instructed Drake to make an attack upon the ships of Spain as they lay in their own ports, and so prevent an invasion. With this command as his authority, Drake sailed to Cadiz in 1587, and burnt or sank more than thirty ships. He would have made an attack upon the principal fleet itself, in the harbour of Lisbon, but Elizabeth held his hand, and in obedience to her desire he made a reluctant return without opening any attack. Had he done so, the history of the defeat of the Armada might have been very different, for at the moment of Drake's proposed onslaught the ships were in confusion and ill prepared for action. But Elizabeth's hesitation again carried the day, and Drake returned home without fulfilling his desire. The following year the Armada bore down upon England. In the struggle which followed, Drake held the position of vice-admiral, and Hawkins was rear-admiral. Both men

rendered magnificent service to their commander, Lord Howard of Effingham, and the utter destruction which was meted out to the fleet of Spain was undoubtedly due to the assistance of those experienced sea captains, who by their own choice had been long trained in the school of foreign seamanship. “By God’s grace,” wrote Drake, “we will so handle the Duke of Sidonia that he will wish himself back amid his orange trees”—a wish which before long the poor duke many a time uttered with all the sincerity of his heart.

From 1588 to 1594 Drake occupied himself partly with sea enterprises, partly with life on shore ; and from 1592 to 1593 he sat in Parliament. But the sea was still his strongest passion, and in 1595 he again set off by royal command on an expedition to the Spanish colonies. From this voyage he never returned. Misfortunes overwhelmed him from the first. His men fell sick ; Sir John Hawkins, who was also with him on the expedition, died ; on all hands the enterprise went badly. In spite of disaster, Drake still held on his course till the following year, 1596, when he himself was taken ill and died. Thus there died at sea on the same voyage, Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake, valiant seamen, two of England’s greatest sailors.

The rest of the crew being left without their captains at once began to think of home ; so that “most men’s hearts were bent to hasten for England as soon as they might.” Two months later the vessels put into harbour in England. It was a mournful return. The expedition had gone ill ; the spirits of the cruisers had long ago sunk into despair ; and away out in the ocean, which dashed its surf on a foreign coast, lay the bodies of the two great commanders, Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake. The queen herself grieved sorely at the death of her

favourite seamen, and throughout the country the people openly lamented. Harsh as he might seem in his dealings, Drake's character had always been marked by uprightness and justice, and in the words of Fuller he was “chaste in his life, just in his dealings, true of his word, merciful to those that were under him, and hating nothing so much as idleness.”

## Phase IV—The Court

### WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURGHLEY

*"His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal."<sup>12</sup>*—MILTON

**W**ILLIAM CECIL, afterwards Lord Burghley, is the pattern of an able, cautious statesman, who, though possessed of no brilliance, rose to a high and honourable position under the Crown, through the integrity of his conduct and the faithfulness of his service.

His long life lasted from 1520 to 1598 and thus stretched over the greater part of four of the Tudor reigns. He was successively esteemed by Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, under each of whom he held a position of trust. The very fact, however, that he held office during reigns of which the policy was so entirely different, points the conclusion that Burghley must have been a man who tempered his opinions to those expressed by his sovereign. Otherwise the minister of Edward VI. could never have found even passing favour in the eyes of Mary, nor have risen again to greater importance under Elizabeth. But if an inclination to bend with the times in some degree marked the character of Burghley, it is also certain that he was invariably upright in his dealings on behalf of the Crown.

By birth he did not belong to the immediate circle of courtiers. His father was a landowner and country squire in Lincolnshire, and here amid the flat scenery of

the eastern counties his son was born in 1520. His father had himself held office under Henry VIII., to whom he had been Master of the Royal Wardrobe, but he had never risen to any great eminence. It seemed unlikely that his son would do more than occupy a position similar to that which his father had held. But events were to turn out quite differently ; Burghley was destined to become the most trusted minister of Tudor times.

He was educated at Grantham Grammar School, and afterwards at St John's College, Cambridge. At the university he very soon gave proof of his diligence ; he worked early and late, often rising at four in the morning to give more time to reading. He was anxious to excel in every branch of learning, and devoted himself with the same eagerness to a study of languages, of logic, of heraldry, and of antiquities. At the same time he was fitting himself for the Bar, and when twenty-one he entered at Gray's Inn. In the profession of law, Burghley would doubtless have distinguished himself greatly, for he was quick of observation, fluent in speech, and had early acquired the useful habit of making notes of anything that had caught his attention, either in a book, or a speech, or an action.

Henry VIII.'s patronage, however, turned him from pursuing his law studies further, and his position at court was soon strengthened by his marriage with the sister of Sir John Cheke, through whom, upon the death of Henry, he was brought to the notice of Edward VI. Burghley's Protestant sympathies were well known, and the Protector Somerset willingly advanced a minister whose views coincided with his own. He made him Secretary of State, and in every way showed himself most friendly towards him. The star of Burghley seemed high in the ascendant when the death of Edward covered it with a cloud. An avowedly Protestant minister could hardly

look for promotion, or even tolerance, at the hands of Catholic Mary.

There were other reasons, moreover, why Mary should not look with a kindly eye upon Burghley. He had been approached by Northumberland in regard to the plot for the elevation of Lady Jane Grey, and he appears to have given at least some support to the scheme. But the sudden shattering of that prospect brought upon Burghley a sharp realisation of the need for propitiating Mary, and he lost no time in approaching her. His ability, which was neither too brilliant to be dangerous, nor of too mean a value to be unworthy of serving the Crown, commended itself to the new queen. She accepted his overtures, and even went so far as to include him in a deputation which was sent to escort Cardinal Pole on his journey to England. Before being entrusted with such a commission, Burghley must have yielded some of the Protestant principles which he had upheld under Edward. But if at this juncture he appears as something of a time-server, it must be remembered that his natural gifts made him a statesman rather than a theologian. And though he was careful not to sacrifice any interests he considered vital, he probably saw no objection in submitting somewhat to Mary's views, provided he could still continue to render the sovereign that assistance which he knew himself capable of giving. Burghley was above all the servant of the sovereign; none knew more accurately than he how best to maintain the equity of the throne, and he delighted in fulfilling an office for which he felt himself naturally fitted.

With the accession of Elizabeth his prosperity reached its high-water mark. His second marriage, with one of the daughters of Sir Anthony Cook, had further advanced his position, and he had already won the favour of the queen while she was still a princess in captivity. The

high office of Secretary of State thus fell to his share, and on giving it to him Elizabeth observed warmly : “ This judgment I have of you, that you will not be corrupted with any gift, and that you will be faithful to the State ; and that without respect of my private will, you will give me that counsel that you think best.”

The service to Elizabeth, which was thus so auspiciously begun, lasted till the end of Burghley’s life, and for the space of forty years he zealously and faithfully toiled on behalf of his royal mistress.

His duties as secretary were not wholly of the kind confined to statesmanship. He was charged with such small details as the issue of precautions against poison being brought into contact with the queen’s person. So strong at the time was the dread of poison, that the secretary solemnly proclaimed in regard to the queen “ That no manner of perfume either in apparel or sleeves, gloves or such like, or otherwise that shall be appointed for your Majesty’s savor, be presented by any stranger or other person, but that the same be corrected by some other fume.”

On another occasion he was engaged upon the withdrawal from circulation of unauthorised portraits of the queen, which Elizabeth wrathfully declared were unflattering. By her express order a “ special cunning painter ” was to be allowed to approach her Majesty to take her “ natural representation,” until which time there was to be a strict prohibition against “ all manner of other persons to draw, paint, grave or portrait her personage or visage for a time until there were some more perfect pattern or example to be followed.” Again in 1566, in the midst of the business of State, the chief minister in England was engaged in unearthing a tailor, who could fit the queen with a robe to her liking. “ The Queen’s

Majesty," he writes in a letter to Sir Henry Norris, the English ambassador in France, "would fain have a taylor that hath skill to make her apparel both after the French and Italian manner, and she thinketh that you might use some means to obtain some one such there as serveth that queen, without mentioning any manner of request in the Queen Majesty's name." Two serious ministers of State debating over the way of discovering a French dressmaker to suit the queen's taste! No wonder that Elizabeth depended largely upon the services of a statesman, who would consent to do her odds and ends of commission, and at the same time keep an eye steadfastly fixed on matters concerning the right government of the State.

One of the greatest of Burghley's private virtues was his generosity towards his friends. Many owed their advancement to his support, and not a few were pulled from the slough of royal disfavour by his intervention. Nevertheless there were some who hated the cautious, cool-headed minister, and in 1569 these set themselves to compass his ruin. Leicester, Norfolk, and many other powerful nobles joined ardently in a scheme to ruin the man whose very virtues roused their irritation. They represented that he was plotting with Spain for the overthrow of Elizabeth and the coronation of Mary, Queen of Scots. But for Elizabeth's promptness, their evil designs might have succeeded. But a hint of the accusations floated to the ears of the queen. At once she repudiated the notion. Cecil be false to her? The idea was absurd. She knew him too thoroughly, and understood his character too deeply to believe him capable of turning traitor. His principles and those of the queen coincided too nearly to admit of such a possibility. Full of indignation she turned hotly upon the men who had concocted the dishonourable plot, and

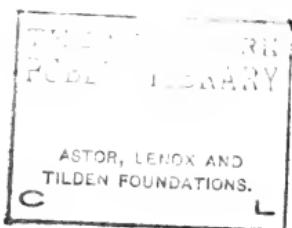


William Cecil, Lord Burghley

(?) Gheeraedts

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the reputation of the secretary was made stronger than ever. Two years later (1571) he was rewarded for his services by receiving the title of Baron Burghley. The honour was warmly popular among the people, who justly looked upon him as an able and upright minister. But the nobles, who had always eyed the secretary sourly, were ill pleased at the tidings ; and the new peer himself confessed that the honour had made him the poorest nobleman in England.

Burghley's one effort throughout his political career had been to keep himself free from the broils that surrounded Mary of Scotland. So cautious was he to avoid any appearance of complicity in plots on her behalf, that as early as 1575, when the Earl of Shrewsbury had written asking that Burghley's daughter might be betrothed to his son, Burghley had replied that the children were still too young to be contracted. Moreover he feared that such a betrothal might be displeasing to the queen, since Elizabeth had been beguiled into thinking her minister favourable to Mary, and therefore he added wisely : "I gather thus that if it were understood that there were a communication, or a purpose of a marriage between your lordship's son and my daughter, I am sure there would be an advantage sought to increase this former suspicious purpose." Earlier in the letter he had observed, "As for the Queen of Scots, truly I have no spot of evil meaning to her, neither do I mean to deal with any titles to the crown. If she shall intend any evil to the Queen's Majesty, my Sovereign, for her sake I must and will mean to impeach her, and therein I may be her unfriend or worse."

Nevertheless, in spite of Burghley's caution, Elizabeth's anger at last fell upon him, and this because of Mary's execution, into which she said Burghley had against her will hurried her. The accusation was entirely unjust, for

Elizabeth herself had signed the order ; but once the deed was done she chose to blame her ministers for it. Her temper, when it was roused, was never easily assuaged, and now she let fly against Burghley such shafts of bitter indignation that he was smitten with the deepest distress. The abyss of ruin yawned suddenly beneath him, and in desperation he was prepared to leap therein, when Elizabeth relented and agreed to see the fallen statesman. Burghley hastened to appear before her Majesty, where he pleaded his cause in so upright and straightforward a way, that Elizabeth, realising that probably never again would she find a man to serve her so truly as this one, restored him to her favour. From this date to the close of his life he retained Elizabeth's confidence. His long and honourable career came to an end in 1598, when he died at the age of seventy-eight. His death was bitterly regretted by the queen, who had learned by long habit to depend upon his advice, and his removal from her councils was a severe blow. His character as a servant of the Crown had been entirely upright. He was not without an appreciation of the benefits that men may receive from those who employ them, and he never scrupled to accept a gift. But it was an age when bribery was hardly regarded as venial, and in the midst of much corruption he proved himself neither grasping nor dishonourable. The long tenure of his office, and the care and prudence he had always displayed in his conduct of affairs had made him universally esteemed by the nation. Throughout the whole country his death was deeply regretted, not only by those who had enjoyed his friendship, but also by those who had watched his career from afar, and knew him merely in his character as a public statesman.

## ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER

*“A goodly apple, rotten at the heart.”—SHAKESPEARE*

**R**OBERT DUDLEY, Earl of Leicester, is chiefly remembered in history as the unworthy recipient of Elizabeth's favours. The romantic side of the queen's nature was touched by the handsome person, ingratiating manner, and flowery speech of the young courtier, and early in her reign she smiled upon him. He had been born on the same day and the same hour as Elizabeth herself, and this fact in itself was enough to fill the fancy of a sovereign so sentimental as Elizabeth showed herself in private life. The ingenious Dudley, aware of the queen's susceptibilities, pointed out a second similarity : he had been imprisoned in the Tower, by Mary's command, during the whole of the time that the same sovereign had kept Elizabeth in virtual confinement. A double link thus joined together monarch and courtier, till by-and-by the hopes of Dudley rose so high that he saw himself as the possible husband of his queen. These vain aspirations were never to be fulfilled ; nevertheless Elizabeth's fondness for her favourite was so great as to allow her to tease him in public, and call him laughingly her “ sweet Robin.”

Robert Dudley was the son of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who had paid so dearly for his attempt to place his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, in the seat lawfully occupied by Elizabeth. Robert was his fifth son,—

the “bad son of a bad father,”—a man of frivolous, unscrupulous character, yet not altogether wanting in the more generous traits. The date of his birth is somewhat uncertain, but it probably occurred in 1532. If this date is correct, then Dudley can only have been a youth of eighteen when he married the unfortunate Amy Robsart, whose pathetic history furnished Sir Walter Scott with material for his novel *Kenilworth*. Upon the death of Edward in 1553, Dudley took some part in his father’s schemes regarding Lady Jane Grey. For this he was thrown into prison, but a year later he was liberated by the general pardon which was then extended to those who had been privy to the plot. Once free from the gloomy recesses of the Tower, Dudley made haste to ingratiate himself with the new queen. He had little to recommend him to Mary’s kindness, for the odium of Northumberland was around him. Nevertheless he was so skilful in his overtures, that before long he was enjoying an established position at court. He undertook the post of courier between Mary and her Spanish husband, Philip, and so zealously did he carry out his business that the queen bestowed on him several marks of favour.

Upon Mary’s death he laid siege with no less diligence to the susceptibilities of Elizabeth. His efforts in this direction were soon rewarded, and his gallant bearing and ready speech commended him to a queen, who delighted to see at her feet a group of abject courtiers. Dudley’s faults, which were only too patent to the scrutiny of the court and the country generally, were either undiscerned by Elizabeth through the veil of his flattery, or else (as is more likely) she chose wilfully to blind her eyes to the unscrupulous side of a character, the wit and versatility of which otherwise delighted her. The year after her accession she bestowed on him the signal honour of the Garter, and at the

same time she frankly displayed to him a partiality, which not even the most dull-witted could fail to observe.

As for Dudley, his vain and ambitious spirit was already brooding upon the possibilities of attaining to the throne itself. The more he dwelt upon the idea the greater the probability seemed, and the more alluring the prospect before him.

Elizabeth had toyed with him so long and so openly that he may be forgiven for having seen in imagination the crown of England upon his brow. But the haughty temper of Elizabeth would never have permitted her to wed in so lowly a quarter, even though her affection might strongly tempt her. She permitted, and even encouraged, the overtures of Leicester; but she had no intention of raising him to an elevation equal to her own. What was hers she intended to keep entirely within her own hands; for by nature she was averse from sharing anything with another. But if ever she had been forced by expediency to the point of choosing a husband, then he would certainly have been selected from among those who by birth could claim blood as royal as her own. Leicester's self-confidence, however, blinded him to the imperial aloofness which lay at the bottom of Elizabeth's character, and in 1560, when the death of his wife, Amy Robsart, left him free to wed again, he prosecuted his addresses to the queen with greater vigour than ever. On her part Elizabeth seemed to grow more and more gracious; she supped with him at his private house, and on her way home after the occasion she declared to her torchbearers that she "would make their lord the best that ever was of his name."

In 1564 she bestowed on him the titles of Baron of Denbigh and Earl of Leicester, and at the same time she made him the splendid gift of Kenilworth Castle and its surroundings. Shortly before this occasion Elizabeth had

mentioned Dudley's name as that of the suitor she would like Mary, Queen of Scotland, to choose. The proposal angered Mary, who, as the sovereign of Scotland and widow of a king of France, had much higher ambitions than a match with an English nobleman whose rank, contrasted with her own was comparatively insignificant. But for the time being she made no remonstrance to the scheme, and even sent an embassy to England to prosecute the matter further. Sir James Melvil, who was the principal personage in this embassy, recorded afterwards in his diary that Elizabeth had commended Leicester to him as one whom she "esteemed as her brother and best friend; whom she would herself have married had she ever minded to have a husband. But being determined to end her life in virginity, she wished the Queen her sister might marry him, as meetest of all others with whom she could find in her heart to declare her second person." Melvil, however, had been instructed to reply very coldly to any proposals that might be made regarding an alliance with Leicester, and seeing his attitude, the earl himself made haste to repudiate the idea. His motive in thus brusquely rejecting the marriage was probably one of mere caution. Had he appeared eager to mate himself with Mary, the jealousy of Elizabeth would have been aroused. Moreover, too ardent protestations would have been distasteful to Mary, as evidences of a vulgar desire to wed with one of more exalted rank than his own. Elizabeth's support of the idea was probably only simulated to try the loyalty of Leicester towards her, and the proposal thus coldly supported soon fell to the ground; while as if to show her pleasure at the course which matters had taken, Elizabeth lavished more fondness than ever upon her favourite.

At these fresh marks of her graciousness Leicester's

ambitious spirit again took wing. But any hopes he might entertain of at last winning the hand of Elizabeth were for ever dashed in 1565, in which year Elizabeth encouraged the advances of the Archduke Charles. Leicester ventured to raise a remonstrance against the union, whereupon his royal mistress turned upon him with a sharpness which at once dispelled any ideas he had entertained regarding his own position as a suitor. After this incident he seems to have dismissed further thought of attaining the hand of Elizabeth, and to have contented himself instead with the rôle of a courtier on intimate and affectionate terms with his royal mistress.

His evil reputation had meanwhile been growing. Dark crimes for which no author could be found, were put down to the hated earl. Too clever to allow any of the imputations against him to be proved, Leicester went about the court with an arrogance which exasperated those who believed him to be the author of more than one foul deed. Evil odium hung round him like a poisonous mist. Everyone feared him ; many plotted against him. But the earl's craftiness conquered every obstacle, and of the acts of malignity charged against him none was ever proved, so deep was his strategy, so far-seeing his caution. "Many," it has been said, "fell in his time which saw not the grasp which pulled them down, and as many died that knew not their own disease."

In 1575 Elizabeth honoured him by visiting Kenilworth for the space of nineteen days, during which time she was entertained on a magnificent scale with shows, masks, and sumptuous banquets. The expense and strain of amusing the capricious sovereign for so long a period must have been very severe, and while sensible of the extreme honour that Elizabeth's visit had conferred upon him, it is probable that Leicester breathed a sigh of relief when it

came to an end. Three years later he again entertained the queen, this time at his mansion at Wanstead, near London.

Meanwhile the earl had secretly married the Countess of Essex, but fearing the jealous temper of Elizabeth he had anxiously concealed from her the news. The rumour, however, at last reached her ears, and soon the queen was made aware that among her court the tidings had been known for some time. The intimation roused her wrath to white heat. Any idea of Leicester marrying was intolerable to her, but that he should have wedded in secret increased her anger against him tenfold. Without stopping to inquire into the justice of her conduct, she flung her favourite into prison, and launched against him the severest marks of displeasure. After a time her resentment died down ; she missed Leicester's presence at the court ; she realised that she had acted hastily and imprudently. She therefore ordered his release, and not only gave him his liberty, but restored him to the old post of confidence which he had held for so long. The nobles groaned inwardly when they saw him again at the height of royal favour, but all admitted the justice of his release, since he had been thrown into prison for no crime whatsoever. Some years later the reputation of Leicester was again assailed in a pamphlet known as *Leicester's Commonwealth*, which was published abroad in 1584. It was a black story that was told in the pages of this little book, and the detestation in which the earl was held was evidenced by the readiness with which the copies were bought. So trenchant an attack could not escape the notice of Elizabeth, and she indignantly declared the book a monstrous libel. But repudiations were useless when Leicester's enemies were so many and so violent. Even Sir Philip Sidney's eloquence could do little towards reinstating the integrity of the earl, who was his uncle.

## Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester 181

The following year (1585), Leicester proceeded to Holland to assist the United Provinces against Spain. His conduct there roused the anger of the queen, for he assumed a state equal to that of a sovereign, and openly vaunted himself in the position which Elizabeth had bestowed upon him in appointing him general over the entire auxiliaries. The death of Sidney, in the struggle at Zutphen, touched Leicester to the quick. Any affection he possessed was given to his brilliant, high-souled nephew, and his early death caused him real anguish. Shortly afterwards he returned to England, where the queen, apparently forgetful of the annoyance his arrogant conduct abroad had caused her, again received him into her favour. A second return to Holland was, however, followed by unfortunate results, and in 1587 Elizabeth recalled her general. Leicester could ill brook anything like a public slight, and he came to England smarting with disappointment and rage. But his influence over the queen was irresistible; no sooner was he back than he was again reinstated in her grace, and before long he was actually restored to the post he had filled so disastrously for England.

But the greatest and most unmerited honour which he wrested from Elizabeth, was that of commander-in-chief of the troops at Tilbury, a post which was given to him upon the outbreak of the war with Spain. The news of his advancement was received with dismay. "The most strenuous defender of the measures of her majesty," says Miss Aikin, "must have been staggered by her nomination of Leicester:—the hated, the disgraced, the incapable Leicester:—to the station of highest honour, danger,<sup>and</sup> importance."

But his career was about to come to an end. In 1588, when there were universal rejoicings over the victory

won by the English against Spain, his death took place, the cause being variously stated as due to fever or to poison. Elizabeth wept bitterly over the loss of her minister, but the people generally were little affected by the news. They had regarded Leicester as the undeserving favourite of a queen, wise in her general policy, but altogether unwise in her abandonment to the charms of a courtier, who grasped ceaselessly at self-advancement, and never hesitated to overthrow any who might happen to obstruct his path. He had sometimes shown himself generous towards his friends, and he had on many occasions given scholars a helping hand. But the memory of these good deeds was obscured by the odium of a hundred others of undeniable atrocity. Leicester's career had been essentially one of greedy self-seeking, and as such it naturally left behind it few pleasant memories in the mind of the people.

## SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

*“This knightliest of all knights.”—TENNYSON*

LIFE during the reign of Elizabeth is reflected in no figure better than it is in that of Sir Philip Sidney :

*“The soldier’s, scholar’s, courtier’s eye, tongue, sword,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form.”*

Sidney’s great charm lay in his magnetic personality, which attracted to him not only a crowd of flatterers and admirers, but also a band of faithful, adoring friends. Even now, when more than three hundred years have passed since his death, there is round his name a subtle influence, which still awakens love; proving how deep and true must have been the nature holding so potent a spell.

As the favourite nephew of the powerful Earl of Leicester, Sidney was early initiated into the scheming atmosphere of court patronage. He must therefore have looked out upon life with a singularly pure gaze, to pass through the jealousies of the palace with his sweetness and his simplicity unimpaired.

His babyhood and boyhood were associated with the pleasant county of Kent. Here, in 1554, he was born at Penshurst Place. Both his parents were of good family, so that from the first their son occupied a high social standing. His father was Sir Henry Sidney, who was President of Wales and Deputy of Ireland. His mother

was the daughter of the ill-starred Duke of Northumberland, and at the moment when Phillip was born she was mourning for the loss of her father, her brother and her sister-in-law, Lady Jane, all of whom had suffered death on the scaffold. Sidney inherited some of the qualities of both his parents. From his father he derived a brave and determined spirit; from his mother the gentle and winning disposition which won for him so much love. Fulke Greville, who was one of his most devoted friends, wrote of him afterwards: "The clearness of his father's judgment, and the ingenious sensibleness of his mother's, brought forth so happy a temper in their eldest son. From the father he had the stout heart and the strong hand and keen intelligence, while his mother set on him the stamp of her own sweet and very gentle nature."

Sidney's friendship with Fulke Greville first began in his college days, and continued steadfastly in such unabated strength, that years after Sidney's death Greville wrote his own epitaph in these words: "Servant to Elizabeth, councillor to King James, friend to Sir Philip Sidney." The testimony that he gives regarding Sidney's disposition is therefore the more valuable, for he must have had every opportunity of knowing the character of his friend from beginning to end.

The first early years of Sidney's life having been spent in Kent, his parents decided to send him to school. Shrewsbury was chosen, and thither he was sent, in 1564, at the age of ten. Lessons presented no difficulty to his eager, fertile mind, and when he was only fifteen he was entered at Christ Church, Oxford. Here again his brilliance quickly attracted notice, while the natural influence of his personality drew round him a circle of friends, chief among whom was one who has already been mentioned, Fulke Greville.

From Oxford to Penshurst, and from Penshurst to court, was an easy stage, and soon Sidney found himself in the midst of Elizabeth's throng of courtiers. The fact that he was the nephew and the supposed heir of the all-powerful Leicester, at once lifted him into a position of importance. Flatterers hurried to meet him ; he was importuned by the needy and the improvident. But besides these there were many who soon felt a genuine liking for the young courtier with the grave face and the gentle manner, and among these Sidney quickly found friends. Towards those whom he thus came to know truly, he showed himself considerate and generous ; he was moreover always ready to respond to advances, and anxious to help in any real distress. His enthusiasm for learning was undiminished by the glamour and the frivolities of court, and he was eager in befriending genius.

In 1578, through the medium of Gabriel Harvey, he was introduced to the poet Spenser, whom he not only encouraged warmly but brought to Penshurst. From here the *Shepherd's Calendar* was subsequently written, and with Sidney's help it was successfully launched in the world. Spenser never forgot this generous kindness shown him, and when Sidney fell on the field of Zutphen in 1586, the beautiful poem *Astrophel* expressed the depth of his friend's grief :

" And every one did make exceeding mone,  
With inward anguish and great grieve opprest :  
And every one did weep and waile, and mone,  
And meanes deviz'd to shew his sorrow best.  
That from that houre, since first on grassie greene,  
Shepheards kept sheep, was not like mourning seen."

Meanwhile Sidney was a young man of eighteen, who had spent three years at Oxford and had seen a little of life

at the English court. High-born relatives stood ready to give him a helping hand ; Elizabeth had already smiled upon him ; he was well educated, naturally clever, beloved ; the whole world seemed to be before him, and he was a-tiptoe to explore it. An opportunity came in 1572, when he was sent to the French court. Here he was warmly received, and the enjoyment of life, which was always a distinguishing mark of his character, seemed at its height when a rude shock came. On the 24th of August 1572 the terrible massacre of St Bartholomew took place, and nearly five thousand people suffered a brutal death. The news of the carnage shocked and revolted Sidney. His noble mind rose against the perfidy which had characterised the act, and his humanity blanched at the thought of the cruel slaughter ; he turned his back on Paris and went into Germany. So from one place to another he passed till 1575 or 1576 when he found his way to England. His return was eagerly welcomed, and his popularity, already great, grew so rapidly that before long Elizabeth declared her court was "deficient without him." Her evident liking pleased Sidney, who was deeply imbued with the spirit of the age and sincerely regarded Elizabeth as a miracle of loveliness and wisdom.

At the express desire of his uncle, the powerful Earl of Leicester, he undertook in 1578 to write for Elizabeth's amusement a mask entitled *The Lady of the May*. It was a labour quite unworthy of Sidney's powers, but the refusal was hard to find, and he therefore consented. Elizabeth herself saw nothing offensive in the extravagant adulation with which these plays were always thickly loaded ; indeed she openly desired praise ; no compliment was too gross for a queen whose vanity was entirely without limits.

But if Sidney seemed to be sinking to the level of a



Sir Philip Sidney

From a curious print after Isaac Oliver

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mere homage-paying courtier, an event was to happen which would rouse him from his dreams and reveal his true nature. This was nothing less than the proposed marriage between the queen and the Duke d'Alençon. For weeks Elizabeth had been dallying with the French embassy ; for weeks she had been torturing her ministers with questions as to her answer. Everyone knew what she ought to do, for the whole country was strongly opposed to the union. But the real question was, how would the queen herself act ? Her indecision grew daily greater, and she sent message after message of delay to her ministers, who were waiting in anxiety to know which course she would take. Meanwhile she continued to harass the court with questions as to what she should do, questions which many prudently evaded. Sidney was at the time acting as her Majesty's cupbearer, and to him she turned one day with the inevitable inquiry : " Shall I yield to the proposal of the Duke d'Alençon ? "

So far the queen had known Sidney only in the guise of a courtier, or a writer of masks for royal delight ; she was now to see him in a new aspect. Her question brought a prompt and decisive answer : he was against the match. The horrors of the Bartholomew massacres ; the incongruity of an alliance between the middle-aged queen and a duke twenty years younger ; his own patriotism ; the open opinion of his countrymen ; all these considerations made Sidney view with loathing the proposal to set the duke on the English throne. The more he contemplated the idea the less he liked it. Hence he bravely resolved to set forth his objections to the scheme in a pamphlet, and submit it to the queen for her perusal. This he actually did, regardless of the effect it was likely to produce on the capricious mind of the queen ; nor in its composition did he veil his opinions in delicate or

obscure words. Referring to the effect of such a match upon Elizabeth's Protestant subjects, he exclaimed : " How will their hearts be galled, if not aliened, when they shall see you take a husband, a Frenchman and a papist. . . . That he himself, contrary to his promise and all gratefulness, having his liberty and principal estate by the Huguenots' means, did sack La Charité, and utterly spoil them with fire and sword ! This, I say, even at first sight, gives occasion to all truly religious to abhor such a master and consequently to diminish much of the hopeful love they have long held to you." In an earnest peroration he begged Elizabeth to seek to please the hearts of her subjects, to uphold her English ministers, so that " doing as you do, you shall be as you be, the example of princes, the ornament of this age, and the most excellent fruit of your progenitors, and the perfect mirror of your posterity."

Had Sidney been less in favour with Elizabeth his bold words would probably have resulted in imprisonment, or at least in definite royal displeasure. But though the queen was chagrined at some of the sentiments voiced by her favourite, she took his admonitions in such good part that she exhibited no further sign of annoyance. Naturally enough, however, the letter made no small stir at court, and for the time everyone was talking of Sidney's temerity, and the queen's reception of his expression of opinion.

At this point, perhaps on account of the buzz of excitement which had risen round him, perhaps because of a private quarrel which he had had with the Earl of Oxford, Sidney retired for a time to Wilton, the seat of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke. Here his active mind found employment in literary toil, and the long hours of quiet which contrasted so sharply with the more turbulent

life at court, were whiled away in the composition of a prose romance, *Arcadia*. This lengthy work represents Sidney's prose style at its best and at its worst. It is full of blemishes of extravagance, reflecting the stilted language then so prevalent at court. The "baa" of the lamb becomes "bleating oratory"; and "eyes" are turned into "day-shining stars." But if many of the disfigurements of the fashionable speech of the day are interwoven into the style, it also exhibits images of great beauty, in sentences full of soft music, dropping on the ear like a lullaby. In such a passage "*Arcadia*" is described as a place where there were "hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers—here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old; there a young shepherdess knitting and withal singing, and it seemed her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music."

Sidney's absence from court did not last for any length of time, and in 1581 he was again in the palace.

Meanwhile the queen was still hesitating about the course she should take towards the Alençon alliance, and to enable her to come to some decision, a new embassy was sent over from France in 1581. The question of providing suitable entertainment for the illustrious strangers agitated the court. Elizabeth's vanity led her to wish to appear before them in the character of a "heroine of romance" rather than as a great and capable ruler. Disdaining to seem serious or earnest, she deliberately assumed an air of trifling, and for this purpose a gigantic show or "triumph" was prepared, and a huge banqueting hall hastily put up, near Whitehall, for its performance. Here

the queen received her visitors at a splendid feast, which was followed by the “triumph” performed in the tilt-yard at Whitehall and organised by Sidney, Fulke Greville, Earl Arundel and Lord Windsor. In this play the place where Elizabeth sat, called the Castle of Perfect Beauty, was under attack from the four knights of Desire—Sidney, Greville, Arundel and Windsor. Elizabeth’s rejection of the suppliants led to a mimic siege, in which cannons poured out scent and sweet-smelling powders, shot took the shape of flowers, and music supplied the noise of shooting. This mock display of gallantry pleased the queen, who even on the verge of fifty could not recognise that she had passed the age of youth. The spectacle lasted several days, and was at last concluded by the challengers handing the queen an olive branch as a sign of their submission.

Sidney’s share in the performance is difficult to explain in the face of his former vigorous opposition to the match, but there were probably two reasons for his conduct. Firstly, in common with the rest of the nation, he believed that the matter was practically settled and that Elizabeth meant to wed the duke; secondly, he no doubt attached to his act no political significance, but only saw in it an opportunity of complimenting the queen, and so in some measure atoning for the chagrin which he had previously caused her. Sidney was not a man to be turned now this way and now that. But he had had his say; his opinion of the marriage was known; now that the matter was ostensibly settled there was no need for him to make further protest. As a matter of fact the alliance never took place, for even after assenting to the articles of the marriage treaty, Elizabeth drew back at the last moment, and the death of the duke soon after brought to an end “the doubts and temptations of the sage Elizabeth.”

Two years later, Sidney's own marriage took place, and he wedded Frances, the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham. His early love had been given to Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, in whose praise he wrote his famous series of sonnets *Astrophel and Stella*. The match with the daughter of Essex had been earnestly urged by Waterhouse, who had become the guardian of the children of Essex upon the earl's sudden death in 1576. "Truly my lord," he had written then to Sir Henry Sidney : "I must say to your lordship as I have said to my lord of Leicester and Mr Philip, the breaking off of this match, if the default be on your parts, will turn to more dishonour than can be repaired with any other marriage in England." But the proposal was never fulfilled. Penelope Devereux became Lady Rich and afterwards the Countess of Devonshire, while Sidney married the daughter of Walsingham. This marriage was popular both at court and in the country. Elizabeth had good reason to respect the father of Sidney's bride, for he bore a high character, unsullied by any suspicion of self-seeking. Sidney's purity of conduct was confessed by everyone, and there was a sense of fitness in the union between the beautiful daughter of a man of such strict integrity and the courtier of proved nobility.

But Sidney was not long to enjoy the pleasures of home life. Affairs on the Continent had been growing steadily more complicated. The death of William the Silent by the hand of an assassin had precipitated affairs in the Netherlands. In their perplexity the people for a second time begged Elizabeth to become their sovereign. Motives of prudence moved her to refuse their tempting offer, but she agreed to send them help in the shape of men and money : soon the whole of England, whose sympathy had

always been with the Netherlanders, was astir with preparations. This was Sidney's opportunity. He had long yearned to prove his soldiering skill, and he was heartily in accord with the principles of Protestantism, which the Dutch were striving to maintain. He begged a share in the enterprise from Elizabeth, who willingly agreed, and appointed him Governor of Flushing in the year 1585. Once in Holland, Sidney's enthusiasm and energy rose to their height. The able tactics of the enemy roused in him a spirit of challenge, and he cautiously but eagerly planned a surprise attack on the town of Axel. His plan succeeded brilliantly and the town was captured, upon which Sidney was rewarded for his valour by the command of a regiment.

The excitement of the encounter urged him to further effort, and he threw himself into an attack upon a Spanish convoy attempting to relieve Zutphen. A hot struggle followed, which in the end proved fatal to Sidney; for though by his zeal and energy he succeeded in gaining the advantage for the English, he himself was mortally wounded. A well-known story tells that as he lay writhing with pain on the field someone offered him a drink of water, which he heroically pushed away from his lips saying: "There is another man by who needs it more than I." Leicester, who had followed his nephew to the scene of action, was overwhelmed with grief when he heard of Sidney's wounds. In a letter to the captain of the queen's guard he wrote: "Many of our horses were hurte and killed, among which was my nephew's own: . . . he received a sore wound upon his thigh, three fingers above his knee, the bone broken quite in pieces. . . . How God will dispose of him I know not; but fear I must needs, greatly, the worst; the blow in so dangerous a place and so great; yet did I never hear of any man that did abide the dressing the

setting of his bones better than he did . . . he is still of good heart and comforteth all about him as much as may be ; God of his mercy grant me his life."

But there was to be no healing for Sidney ; and a few weeks after this date he died. The news of his death called forth lively expressions of sorrow. He had been loved and respected by everyone, and from the queen downwards there was the keenest grief at his loss. The purity of his character, his freedom from all self-interest, and the magnetism of his personality had won for him an affection that few ever gain. Poets heaped upon him their laments ; foreign ministers sent messages of sorrow ; the court went into mourning ; and the country generally bewailed his end. In him, men had seen the fairest type of high-souled knighthood, and they recognised his career as that of one who had consistently borne " the white flower of a blameless life."

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

*"Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,  
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please."*  
SPENSER, "Faerie Queene"

AMONGST the brilliant figures with which the court of Elizabeth was crowded there was none with a more winning personality than Sir Walter Raleigh. Handsome in appearance, ready with his tongue, generous to his friends, with the dash of the sailor, the fearlessness of the soldier and the enthusiasm of the scholar, his was a personality which easily attracted attention. Elizabeth looked graciously upon him from the first, and the impulsive gallantry which prompted him to fling down a richly-lined cloak, sooner than allow her Majesty's feet to be soiled with mud, at once raised him high in royal favour.

Birth had placed Raleigh in the peaceful country home of a yeoman farmer and landowner in the luxuriant county of Devon. Here he was born in 1552 on the South Devon coast, and here he passed his boyhood. His mother seems to have been a woman of high intellect, who could also boast of noble blood, for she counted among her near relations the proud squires of Champernoun. She was twice married, her first husband being Sir Otho Gilbert, who thus became the father of the famous Sir Humphrey Gilbert.

As a boy, Raleigh often listened to tales of adventure related to him by his stepbrother ; and his eager imagination painted in bright colours those far-off lands of which Gilbert spoke so lightly. "Were I a man I, too, would



Sir Walter Raleigh

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go," thought Raleigh ; " I, too, would see these marvels of which I hear." Already he had an eye for the rich beauties of his county of Devonshire, but as he looked upon the lanes and fields which surrounded his home, there was ever present in his mind a yet brighter picture of those strange, far-off, wonderful lands, the thought of which filled his heart with wild longing. The restlessness of spirit, which he thus began to exhibit, distinguished him throughout his life. His abilities were so many and so varied that he was inclined to pass lightly from one occupation to another ; conscious that he could do each well, yet lacking the concentration necessary to make him bend all his energies in one direction. So he was at different times courtier, statesman, author, soldier and sailor, and in each department he won renown. The same flaw perhaps explains the difficulty which Raleigh sometimes experienced in keeping together the men under his control. He could plan out an expedition and create in his crew the liveliest enthusiasm, but in the face of hardship or danger his organisation was apt to fail, and those who were still most ready to go on a wonder voyage under his guidance unconsciously showed by their behaviour that they missed the hand of discipline.

But in the meantime he was still a boy in his teens, full of zest for country life. At an early age he was sent to Oxford, where his ready intelligence won for him high praise. But Raleigh was looking far beyond the pages of books : he was gazing upon that world which he saw in his imagination rising dimly outlined on the other side of the Atlantic. He longed to be up and doing, and upon the first opportunity he quitted Oxford and went to France, to gain practical knowledge of soldiering, and to serve in the army on behalf of the persecuted Huguenots. The moment was a crucial one abroad, and at the battle

of Jarnac, Condé, the great Huguenot leader, was slain. Raleigh himself took part in this disastrous struggle, and though little is known of the details of his career at the time, a contemporary historian recorded of the English battalion : "They were a gallant company, nobly mounted and accoutred, . . . many of them rose afterwards to eminence. But the most noted of them all was Walter Raleigh."

The moment in Raleigh's life, for which he had been longing ever since he was old enough to understand romance, came in the year 1578, when he set off on a voyage of discovery with his stepbrother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. The expedition went badly, and Raleigh was forced to return before reaching the end of the journey. Nevertheless it was his first taste of seamanship, the first realisation of his boyish desire for adventure ; and as such, in spite of failure, it must have remained in his mind as an altogether wonderful experience.

The next few years he spent in Ireland as a soldier, in opposition to the rebellion that had been raised by the Earl of Desmond. So far he had not come under the notice of Elizabeth ; he was still comparatively poor and unknown,—a position against which his proud spirit greatly chafed. But in 1581 fortune brought him into royal favour by means of a cloak cast at an opportune moment for her Majesty to step upon. Elizabeth was always open to flattery, and now she took a sudden and ardent fancy to the handsome young soldier, who had paid her so graceful a compliment. She sent for him to come to court, and henceforward his position with the queen was assured. On his side, Raleigh was carried away by Elizabeth's evident liking for him, and impetuously he cast away all his former great plans for service at sea or in the army, devoting himself instead to a courtier's life. His enthusiasm for

Elizabeth's beauty, her wisdom, her graciousness, her accomplishments, was quite sincere. He looked upon her with the wholehearted admiration which filled the nation itself. To her subjects, Elizabeth was really the paragon of all virtue, loveliness and wisdom ; and it is one of the greatest tributes to her power that she kept in her service so many men of brilliance and statesmanship, who to the end looked upon her with unabated reverence and love.

In this way Raleigh passed two or three years, heedless of any world beyond the reach of Elizabeth's glance. But in 1584 his old ambition awoke, and restlessness again possessed him. To glorify the name of the queen he planned out a colonising expedition to America. His eagerness fired others, who readily fell in with his plans, and so the adventure was begun. Raleigh himself took no active part in the expedition, beyond planning its course and obtaining from the queen a patent, granting to himself and his heirs all colonies he might establish, together with the fifth of any minerals which might be found therein. Thus was begun the first attempt at colonising the coast of North America, which, from Florida to Newfoundland was known roughly as Virginia. The name, which was given by Raleigh in honour of Elizabeth, was another instance of his delicate flattery which the queen so much enjoyed. In return she bestowed knighthood upon him—an honour she only gave rarely, for even in this particular Elizabeth was always parsimonious. But things went ill in the Virginian colony. Raleigh might direct from home, but he could not be sure that his plans would be followed out, and though more than one expedition was sent to strengthen English hold on the territory, they only succeeded in enraging the natives. So that when Sir Richard Grenville landed there in 1586, instead of

signs of occupation and prosperity, he found everything "deserted and in ruins."

Meanwhile at court there were many changes. In 1588 Leicester died and his place was taken by his stepson, Essex, then only twenty-two years of age and thus some fourteen years younger than Raleigh. Between Essex and Raleigh was already rivalry and even hatred, and now the situation became more acute. Elizabeth's open partiality for Raleigh naturally aroused envy in the minds of those who had not succeeded in securing her favour. "This Raleigh," they said among themselves, "what has he done that he should be flaunting himself with the queen?" They complained that her Majesty looked upon him as "an oracle," and the idea irritated not a few. Nevertheless there were many who loved Raleigh for his frank manners, his eager spirit, and his large-hearted disposition. His generosity was notorious and his sympathies were always aroused by those in distress. To such he proved himself a true friend, and he would pray the queen early and late on their behalf. On one such occasion Elizabeth cried impetuously: "When, Sir Walter, will you cease to be a beggar?" Raleigh's ready tongue found the right answer. "When your Majesty ceases to be a benefactor," he replied. But in the year 1588, largely through Essex's influence, he found royal favour declining. For a time he prudently secluded himself from court. His withdrawal soon lessened the prejudice against him; before long his disgrace was entirely forgotten, and in 1591 Elizabeth signified the return of her favour by allowing him the grant of the manor of Sherborne in Dorsetshire. But the following year, his marriage with Elizabeth Throgmorton again roused the queen's anger. For a time he was even detained in the Tower, and on being set free, he wisely sought the seclusion of Sherborne. In this beautiful home

he and his wife lived for some time, sequestered from the excitement of court, but happy in each other's company. By-and-by his fertile mind began to turn again to thoughts of exploration. Pictures of Guiana, the fabled El Dorado or Golden City of the Spaniards, flitted through his imagination. His old optimism was roused ; eagerness consumed him ; he was anxious to be off. Soon his enthusiasm took practical shape, and in 1595 he sailed to Guiana at the head of a fleet of five vessels. The strange appearance of the natives, their odd customs and their curious foods, fired his interest. He delighted in the novelties which everywhere displayed themselves. His enthusiasm encouraged his men, who were inclined to grow faint-hearted from privations, but whose daring reasserted itself when they saw their commander bearing a cheerful countenance, willingly sharing in every privation and holding out the hope of speedy success. El Dorado itself eluded their search, but nevertheless they came home laden with valuable information, and bearing specimens of the gold-producing nature of the land—a land later described by Raleigh as “a country . . . untouched by the natives of the Old World ; never sacked, turned, or wrought ; the face of the earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance.”

Raleigh's prolonged absence from court had been his enemies' opportunity. Day by day they had poured their poison into the queen's ear, and now upon his return he found only a cold reception. The difference struck him severely. He had returned “a beggar and withered,” and though he had suffered all this together with “labour, hunger, heat, sickness and peril,” solely for the sake of Elizabeth's glory, yet her favour was gone from him. Embittered by his reception Raleigh's pride mounted to

its height, and in 1596 he despatched a squadron under a capable officer on a second voyage to Guiana. Meanwhile he himself took part in the famous Cadiz expedition, where he won renown for his daring. Nevertheless Elizabeth still looked coldly upon him, and he did not win back her commendation till a happy chance led him to reconcile a difference between Essex and Cecil, after which she again admitted him to her presence.

With the death of Elizabeth the fortunes of Raleigh at once sank. James had a prejudice against him from the first, and before long suspicion of treason fell upon him. This was caused through the false statements of Lord Cobham. Soon after the accession this nobleman had been arrested for supporting Spain in the "Main" Plot, which aimed at deposing James and putting in his place Arabella Stewart. Upon his arrest, Cobham shamelessly declared that Raleigh was also concerned in the matter, though it was notorious that during the whole of his life Raleigh had been even violently opposed to Philip. From the moment the case opened it was easy to see that it would go against Raleigh. Coke, who conducted the trial, was determined to prove the prisoner "the notorious traitor that ever came to the bar. Nay, I will prove all," he cried. "Thou art a monster. Thou hast an English face but a Spanish heart."

Remonstrance was useless, and when Raleigh begged : "Let me answer for myself," the judge replied tartly, "Thou shalt not." Later in the trial, however, he was allowed to address the jury on his behalf, whereupon his eloquence rose to a height as he pleaded "before Almighty God I am as clear as whosoever here is freest." But nothing could rescue Raleigh from the hatred of Cecil, nor spare him the virulence of Coke, whose spiteful intentions towards him could be seen in his spluttering speech. "Thou art an odious fellow ; thy name is hateful to all the realm of

England for thy pride." So the trial went on its way to the end, when the sentence of death was pronounced. Raleigh met the verdict with the calmness of innocence. "The jury have found me guilty," he observed. "They must do as they are directed." Believing that death was imminent, he wrote his farewell to his wife in grave, beautiful words. Shortly before this he had been induced to beg that his life might be spared. The remembrance of this petition rankled in his mind and he charged his wife : "Get those letters, if it be possible, which I writ to the lords, wherein I sued for my life. God is my witness it was for you and yours that I desired life. But it is true that I disdain myself for begging it ; for know it, dear wife, that your son is the son of a true man, and one who in his own respect despiseth death in all his misshapen and ugly forms."

But the sentence of death was not to be carried out so hastily as Raleigh imagined. To his surprise it was changed to one of imprisonment and therefore for the time he was sent to the Tower. Here he lived from 1603 till 1616, free to see his wife and friends, but hindered from going abroad. The confinement tried his restless spirit severely, and to lessen the hardships of detention he busied himself upon his *History of the World*, a gigantic undertaking which he carried down to B.C. 167.

Freedom of a sort came again to him in 1616, when James gave him liberty for the purpose of conducting an expedition to the Orinoco. Disaster dogged his footsteps from the first. His son died by the hand of a Spaniard, and the whole enterprise failed hopelessly. Broken-hearted and full of trepidation at the reception he would get from the ungenerous king, Raleigh nevertheless honourably made his way back to England. Here his worst fears were realised. James was in a mood for making peace with

Spain, and he saw in Raleigh an opportune victim. By sacrificing him he might appease Spain, and this he actually did. Raleigh was spirited enough to defend his attack on the Spaniards, exclaiming : “ If it were lawful for the Spaniards to murder twenty-six Englishmen, tying them back to back and cutting their throats, when they had traded with them a whole month . . . we may justly say, ‘ O miserable English.’ ”

But no thought of justice could hold the king back from his purpose. Raleigh must be done to death. Thus he died, a victim to James and Spain. Formerly he had been thrown into prison on a charge of supporting the Spaniards against the English ; now he was beheaded for attacking them in defence of England, a fact which proves the futility of both accusations against him. Nevertheless death was to him a lighter sentence than perpetual imprisonment. The news of the verdict passed upon him scarcely roused him from the deep despondency, which had come upon his once eager, restless spirit. “ My age,” he said, “ is fit for the grave. What have I to do with life ? My reputation is lost, my body weak and full of pain. Nothing can be more welcome to me than death.”

On the 29th of October 1618 the execution was carried out, and Raleigh met his fate with the same high courage which had always been his in life. It is said that he wrote these lines on the night before he died :

*Even such is Time, that takes on trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with earth and dust;  
Who in the dark and silent grave,  
When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days:  
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up. I trust.*

## Phase V—The Renaissance

### WILLIAM CAXTON

*“As good almost kill a man as kill a good book.”*  
MILTON, “Areopagitica”

WILLIAM CAXTON was born in the year 1422 and he died in 1491. His life therefore hardly comes at all within the Tudor period, for he was already old when Henry VII. ascended the throne, and his death took place only six years later. But if in mere point of time the life of Caxton stands outside Tudor limits, the effect of his work upon the New Learning and the Reformation is so important and far-reaching, that he may be said to belong more truly to that period than to the time of the Wars of the Roses. But for the introduction of printing, the New Learning must have been greatly retarded, if not altogether hindered; while the rapid growth of the Reformation was largely owing to the spread of knowledge, through printed books. “In the twelfth or even in the fourteenth century,” says Macaulay, “not one man in five hundred could have spelled his way through a psalm. Books were few and costly . . . it was obviously impossible that the laity should search the Scriptures for themselves.” The introduction of printing had brought with it a very different state of affairs. “The clergy were no longer the sole or the chief repositories of knowledge. Printing had furnished the assailants of the Church with a mighty weapon which had

been wanting to their predecessors." So if the greater part of Caxton's life lies outside the sixteenth century he lives so forcibly in both the great intellectual and the great religious movements of the days of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, that his career must needs be studied in order to understand fully the history of that day.

According to his own statement Caxton was born in the Weald of Kent, then an entirely rural and " wild " district. On his own authority, too, it is known that though he travelled considerably during his life he never saw France. " In France was I never, and was born and learned mine English in Kent and in the Weald where I doubt not is spoken as broad and rude English as in any place of England." Very little is known of his boyhood in the beautiful Kentish country ; but he was evidently the son of well-to-do people, probably landowners, who saw that he had what was in those days a good education. " I am bounden," he says, " to pray for my father's and mother's souls, that in youth set me to school, by which by the sufferance of God I get my living I hope truly."

In the meantime Caxton passed from school to a mercer's shop, where he was bound apprentice. In those days a mercer was the name given to a general merchant, and it is possible that the stock may have included one or two copies of books, then such rare and precious possessions. But even so, Caxton can have had little opportunity for getting into touch with books ; nor did he exhibit any predominating love for knowledge. No one would have expected that the great boon of printing should at last come to England through the efforts of the 'prentice lad, busy with his tasks at the mercer's shop in Cheapside.

From behind his wares Caxton must have looked out with eager eyes upon many strange sights. All the state

processions went along Cheapside, and he must thus have seen the magnificent entry made by Henry VI. at the time of his return to England from France. Moreover he must have taken part in many a 'prentice fray, when the 'prentice boys rushed off, an excited gang, to share in any excitement in their neighbourhood at the moment. It is certain that on such occasions Caxton would not be left behind. He would be off with the company of others, wearing the 'prentice costume of the day—"a flat round cap, hair close, narrow falling bands, coarse side coats, close hose, close stockings, and other such severe apparel."

By-and-by promotion came to good Robert Large, the mercer, and he was appointed mayor of the city. From this point till 1441 the history of Caxton is unknown ; but in 1441, his master then being dead, he went to Bruges, probably on business connected with the firm. For the next twenty years he remained on the Continent, with perhaps an occasional visit to England. In the meantime he set up in business for himself abroad and gradually rose in reputation. In 1464 he obtained a post of importance for he was appointed to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good. The next three years were probably passed at the court of Philip, where Caxton first began his translation of a French romance, the *History of Troy*. Philip died soon afterwards and he was succeeded by his son, Charles the Rash, a prince who was inordinately fond of tournaments. Here Caxton lingered for a time, becoming filled with that love for romance and chivalry which afterwards led him to print many books on these themes. "Oh," he exclaimed in the *Book of the Order of Chivalry* which he printed years afterward, in 1484, "Oh, ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry that was used in those days ? What do

ye now but go the baynes [baths] and play at dice ? Leave it, leave it ! and read the noble volumes of St Graal, of Lancelot, of Galaad, of Trystran, of Perse Forest, of Percyval, of Gawayn, and many more : there shall ye see manhood, courtesy, and gentleness. . . . Alas what do ye but sleep and take ease and are all disordered from chivalry ? ”

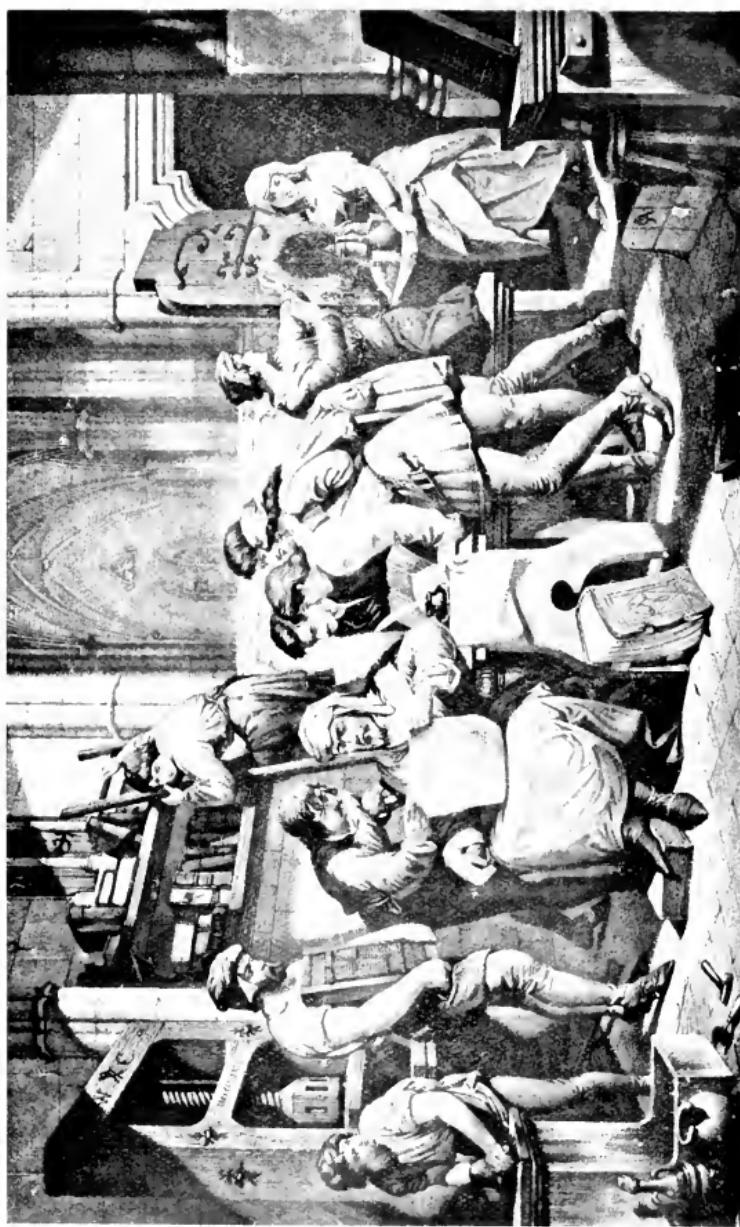
From 1471 to 1476 Caxton was in the service of Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, sister to Edward IV. of England. The duchess took great interest in the translations which Caxton had begun, and under her encouragement he carried to completion the translation of the *History of Troy* which he had begun some years before during the lifetime of Philip the Good. The book was dedicated to Margaret, at whose command it had reached completion, a command which Caxton said, “ I durst in no wise disobey.” In the dedication he therefore offered it to the duchess, “ beseeching the bounteous highness of my said lady that of her benevolence she do accept and take in gree [i.e. favourably] this simple and rude work.”

Under Margaret’s protection, Caxton went about from Bruges to Ghent, from Ghent to Cologne, and though nothing is known of his life during these years, we may be sure that wherever he went he found a welcome, and made friends. His disposition was eager and expansive, and he had the rare gift of winning a friendship and keeping it unbroken. Wynkyn de Worde, who later became his disciple, was not the only one who looked back upon the memory of his master with loving reverence.

It was in Cologne that the great moment of Caxton’s life came to him. By this time he was nearly fifty years of age, in favour with persons in high station, well known among the higher commercial classes, something of a

Caxton reading his First Proof

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translator, and a man whom everyone liked. His career in life seemed apparently destined to run on to the end in the way it had begun. Yet a change was coming, and one of such magnitude that it would affect not only the life of Caxton, but the future of the two greatest movements of Tudor times, the Reformation and the Revival of Learning, both of which were as yet not wakened from slumber.

Thus Caxton entered Cologne, the city in which he was to learn how books were printed. Already on the Continent printing had made great strides. In Italy especially the art was in full progress, so that it was even said that "with a little money the poorest person might collect together a few books." But England herself was still unaware of the tremendous change which was taking place, and though only a narrow strip of blue sea separated her from the rest of the Continent, she was totally ignorant of the new art which was beginning to revolutionise Europe.

In Cologne, Caxton set himself to conquer the mystery of the printing press, and between the years 1471 and 1474 he thoroughly succeeded. His translation of the *History of Troy* had brought him no little fame; many people began to ask him for copies, and to meet this demand he resolved to have the book set up in type. He refers to his decision himself. "Thus end I this book which I have translated after mine author, as nigh as God hath given me cunning. . . . As for as much as in the writing of the same, my pen is worn, my hand weary, and not stedfast, mine eyen dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body; and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address

to them as hastily as I might this said book, therefore I have practised and learned at my great charge and dispense to ordain the book in print, after the manner and form as you may here see ; and is not written with pen and ink as other books are, to the end that every man may have them at once."

The date when the book thus appeared in all the newness of print was probably 1474. Two more years were still to elapse before Caxton was to return to England, and three before he was to set up his printing press at Westminster. Meanwhile in Cologne he busied himself in thoroughly mastering his art, in buying type and in printing books that he knew would find a ready sale and so bring him the money he needed to make his purchases. Exactly what books he printed during this time it is not known, but amongst them was one called *Bartholomæus*, which was evidently printed with an eye to profit as well as knowledge, for Wynkyn de Worde says of it later :

“ *Also of your charyté call to remembraunce  
The soule of William Caxton first prynter of this boke,  
In laten tonge at Coleyn hymself to avaunce  
That every well dispoyseyd man may thereon loke.*”

By 1476 Caxton's preparations were finished, and he came to England bringing with him his precious type. The following year he set up his press at Westminster. Whether this was actually inside the Abbey or in a small building since demolished, but then adjoining the Abbey itself, is not certain. But that it was in some room near is evident from Caxton's own remark at the end of the *Booke of the Noble Hystoryes of Kynge Arthur*, which he remarks was “ by me devydid into XXI bookes, chaptyred and enprynted and fynyshed in th' abbey WEST MESTRE.”

It was no light task that Caxton had taken upon himself to carry out : the work of a printer in those early days was a difficult undertaking. The printing machine itself needed the most careful and delicate handling to avoid spoiling the type. It was exceedingly primitive in its arrangements and was worked in the way of an ordinary screw press, which fastened down upon the type. The printer had also to make his own ink, which he applied by ink-balls, saturated in ink and then dabbed on to the type. Even these ink-balls had to be manufactured by the printer's own hands from pieces of sheepskin, stuffed with wool. But still this was not all ; there were the clasps and the binding to see to, and these were also the task of the printer. Moreover binding was then almost a work of carpentry, for the boards were really boards, hammered flat, and covered with leather, which was often beautifully embossed with the figures of animals and birds. The weight of such books thus became considerable and Erasmus, who was something of a humorist as well as a scholar, once remarked : "As for Thomas Aquinas's *Secunda Secundæ* no man can carry it about, much less get it into his head." After the binding came the clasps, splendid pieces of workmanship, designed not only to beautify but also to preserve the volume. At last the book was ready, but the anxiety of the printer was still not yet over ; for he had now to sell it, and should he fail to find a purchaser for it the book would be a heavy loss on his hands. Even to-day the printing of books is a costly business, and only profitable when a large number of copies are sold, so that in the days of Caxton, when printing was in its infancy, and when at most only a few reproductions of each book were published, the task of carrying on the work must have called for high courage and noble purpose. Caxton had both these qualities, and once he had under-

taken the work he maintained it till the very day of his death, with a steadfastness altogether admirable. Some idea of the splendour of the early books issued by the Westminster press may be obtained by the description of the volume of Gower's poem, *Confessio Amantis*, which Caxton presented to Richard III. The sovereign received the book from Caxton's hands in the royal bedchamber. Then "when the King opened it, it pleased him well, for it was fair illumined and written, and covered with crimson velvet, with ten buttons of silver and gilt, and roses of gold in the midst with two great clasps of gilt, richly wrought." Feelings of pride and patriotism must have swelled in Caxton's heart, as he looked upon the handsome volume and reflected that it had been wrought by his own labour; that he had been the one through whom the marvel of printing had first been brought to England.

Between 1477, which was the date of the establishment of the press in Westminster, and the year in which Caxton died, about eighty books were issued. Nearly all these were in English, for the knowledge of Latin was confined to the scholarly few. Amongst the richer classes the introduction of printing at first roused a strange objection; they thought that learning was being made common, and some went so far as to make a boast of ignorance, till amongst the idler classes of society it became fashionable to be unable to read. "Proud men," remarked Southey later, "looked upon learning as disgraced."

But this extraordinary attitude could not long resist the tide of learning which was beginning to pour over land. Printing was too firmly established; the time when there should be books without end had already begun; for Caxton's work was to be carried on to all generations.

Meanwhile he was labouring unceasingly at Westminster, publishing books of all sorts, of which the *Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres* is supposed to have been the first volume printed in England. It was followed by many others, of which a number dealt with tales of chivalry and romance. Amongst these latter were the *Book of Jason*, the *History of Reynard the Fox*, the *Fables of Æsop* and the *Golden Legend*. His splendid scholarly attitude towards his work is seen in his second edition of the *Canterbury Tales*—poems to which he was specially attracted. The first edition was found to contain several errors and to be generally incorrect, whereupon he at once set to work again and brought out a second, corrected edition.

In 1490, Caxton, then an old man, was busy over translating from the French the *Art and Craft to Know Well to Die*. Two years later his own work came to an end, and he himself died about the age of seventy. Though the exact time of his birth is uncertain, a record in the register of St Margaret's Church, Westminster, makes his death certain to within a year. For amongst the accounts of the parish from 1490 to 1492, occurs the following entry :

“ Item : atte bureyng of William Caxton  
for iiiij torches                vjs viiid  
Item : for the belle at same  
bureyng . . . vjd ”

When the busy life of Caxton was over, and his burial had taken place, four men met together in the little room at Westminster. They were the men who had worked with Caxton, and had learned under his guidance to look reverently upon printed books. Now their master had gone from them, who would in future

direct them ? Full of sadness they stood looking silently at the idle press in the room still littered with half-finished manuscripts, ink-balls, and other necessities of their craft. It was not often that this room had shown such idleness ; usually it had borne an air of enterprise, and busiest among the workers had been Caxton himself. A sense of the incongruity of inaction in a place so devoted to labour roused Wynkyn de Worde ; his lips trembled, and an eager look sprang into his eyes as he turned impetuously to his companions. His radiant expression arrested the three, whose faces were still mantled with gloom, and for a moment they gazed at him in amazement.

Charles Knight has well imagined the scene :

“Companions,” said Wynkyn, “the good work will not stop.”

“Wynkyn,” said Richard Pynson, “who is to carry on the work ?”

“I am ready,” said Wynkyn.

A pause fell upon the others as each of the three men turned over in his mind the difficulties and embarrassments of the undertaking. Then again Wynkyn took up the thread :

“He died,” said Wynkyn, “as he lived. The *Lives of the Holy Fathers* is finished as far as the translator’s labour. There is the rest of the copy. Read the words of the last page which I have written. ‘Thus endeth the most virtuous history of the devout and right renowned lives of holy fathers . . . which hath been translated out of French into English by William Caxton of Westminster, late dead, and finished at last day of his life.’ ”

“Is not this a hazardous enterprise ?” said Machlinia.

“Why should we fear ?” retorted Wynkyn. “You

Machlinia, you Lettou, and you, dear Richard Pynson, if you choose not to abide with your old companions here, there is work for you all in the good towns of Westminster, London, and Southwark. You have money; you know where to buy types. Printing *must* go forward."

The brave words of Wynkyn conquered; printing went forward. And so the spirit of Caxton went marching on. Wynkyn's vision came true; books became common in the ploughman's cottage as well as in the sovereign's palace; but this was not all, for through books came learning, and through learning came the Reformation, which swept like a torrent over England, cleansing in its rapid passage the ancient formularies of a Church, which had long been bound in subservience and ignorance. How much the history of that movement owes to Caxton is sometimes forgotten, yet it is certain that his was no insignificant share.

## SIR THOMAS MORE

*“A man of singular virtue and of a clear unspotted conscience : . . . more pure and white than the whitest snow.”*

ROPER’S “Life of Sir Thomas More”

**I**N the self-seeking atmosphere of the court of Henry VIII. there moved a man whose life was of such singular sweetness and virtue that even the few who were his enemies could find no evil with which to charge him. Brave, steadfast, scholarly, sympathetic, studious, loving laughter yet never stooping to frivolous vulgarity, Sir Thomas More was not only one of the most distinguished scholars of his day but one of the most beloved of men. At his death he left behind him an imperishable memory of a life well lived ; of a man whose steadfastness of purpose neither the commands of the sovereign nor the pleadings of friendship could shake.

He was born in 1478, in comfortable worldly circumstances, for he was the son of Sir John More, a judge of some distinction. Till he was thirteen he went to school at St Anthony’s College in London, after which he was sent to the household of Cardinal Morton the archbishop. Even at this early age More gave signs of the power that was in him, while his sweet-tempered disposition already made everyone his friend. As he stood by the cardinal at the table, bearing in his hand a cup of wine, his master would often glance at his serene, boyish face and exclaim : “This child here waiting at table, whosoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man.” These words were a true prophecy, for ere the boy had passed into manhood,

and from thence to middle life, he had shown himself indeed a marvellous man.

But the pleasure which the archbishop found in the boy's company did not blind him to More's own interests. He saw that he was too young yet for life at court, and he therefore had him sent to Oxford that he might continue his studies. This was a decision entirely agreeable to More. He delighted in the refined, cultured atmosphere of Oxford, where men of scholarship were experiencing the thrill of the New Learning. Before long he had become associated with all the most prominent students of the day, and Colet was one of his dearest friends.

In this way two pleasant years sped by, in which More's intellect rapidly developed, while at the same time he endeared to himself a circle of eager friends. From Oxford he went to London, in 1494, to read for the Bar. Again two years passed in law study, at the end of which he qualified as a barrister. Meanwhile he still maintained his friendship with Colet, and the two friends often found opportunities for meeting together. The spirit of the Reformation was already beginning to stir the air, and for a time More contemplated entering the Church. But the plan was never carried out, and instead he threw all his energies into gaining distinction at the Bar. Nevertheless his naturally devout nature made him ever struggle after an ideal which he had set up for himself. He wore a hair shirt daily ; yet so far was he from making a parade of any self-imposed penance, that he studiously concealed the fact, which in his lifetime was never revealed to any save his wife and his eldest daughter. Few of those who knew More in his merriest moods, when laughter often broke from his lips, and jests sprang swiftly to his tongue, guessed that beneath his apparently careless disposition there lay hid a character

as firm as steel, a character that no one, not even the imperious Henry VIII., could bend.

In 1497 More chanced to meet Erasmus, then making a visit to England. A friendship at once sprang up, to which Colet was later admitted. Thus began an intimacy which had an important bearing upon the New Learning movement. More himself was the central figure, and while Colet praised his ability and the charm of his character, Erasmus cried impulsively : " When did Nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than the temper of Sir Thomas More ? "

While still very young, More married the daughter of an Essex gentleman named Colte, and henceforward his career took a new turn. He was intensely fond of the simple pleasures of quiet home life, and in later years when he was unwillingly immersed in the artificialities of court, he grudged every hour which took him away from his wife and children.

Yet More was no mere recluse, caring nothing for the rest of humanity. He took a deep and real interest in all that concerned the public welfare, and already he was pondering in his mind over social problems, which even still remain unsettled. About the year in which he was married he began to give much of his attention to politics, and from the pleasant seclusion of his house in Chelsea he viewed thoughtfully matters of State, of Government, and the general condition of the country. By now he had a place among the Commons, and in 1504 he made a memorable stand against the king. It was the time of the marriage of the Princess Margaret to James IV. of Scotland, and to meet the occasion Henry VII. demanded an exorbitant subsidy. Nothing daunted by a display of royal anger, More firmly opposed the request, and so strong was his persuasion that the Commons, follow-

ing his lead, refused the sum their sovereign had asked for. This was a rebuff that the narrow mind of Henry VII. could ill brook. "A beardless boy had disappointed his purpose." He therefore turned spitefully upon his opponent and vented upon him an intensity of dislike and revenge. But though he tried hard to discover some loophole for punishing More he could find none. With inherent meanness, he next set about making a quarrel with his father, Sir John More, whom he threw into the Tower till he should pay the fine of a hundred pounds. Had Henry continued on the throne, it is probable that More would have been forced to leave England before he could escape from persecution, but this necessity was obviated by the death of the sovereign in 1509 and the accession of Henry VIII. At once More's fortunes underwent a change. His brilliance in an important legal case was reported to the king, whose interest was thus roused, and he straightway sought to draw him into his service. But to his amazement More was "loath to change his estate." Henry therefore placed the matter in the hands of Cardinal Wolsey, who added his entreaties, in which he assured More "how dear his services must needs be unto his Majesty." But still the barrister was unconvinced. He did not want to be embroiled in court strategies; he craved for quiet and the joys of life in a country home. For a time Henry was obliged to accept his refusal, but it was only for a time. He had no intention of letting a man of such undoubted brilliance escape for long from using his intellect to the benefit of the Crown. The opportunity came in 1518. In a Star-Chamber case of great significance, More spoke to such powerful effect that Henry would no longer be denied him. He appointed him Master of the Requests with the observation that henceforth he "would not be induced

any longer to forbear his service." Thus in the year 1518 More entered upon a royal service, which was to press more and more heavily upon his shoulders till he should by no means be able to shake it off, and through which he was later to come to his doom.

Life at court soon convinced More more deeply than ever of the evil condition of the social life in England, and in order to express his ideas he set about writing a book. Thus he began his great literary undertaking, the story of Utopia. He found close at hand the ideas which furnished the narrative. He saw the struggle of the poor against the rich ; he saw religious belief being forced upon men ; he saw bribery and corruption rife among the highest officials in the land. Casting about for some way in which he could safely teach the lesson he had in his mind, he set to work to picture an ideal commonwealth in the land of Utopia or Nowhere. By writing of an imaginary country he secured himself against accusations of treason, while the narrative form which he adopted gave his pamphlet an additional interest. The book was at first written in Latin, but it soon became popular and was finally translated not only into English but into nearly every Continental tongue. It aimed at depicting a country in which the "equalitye of all thinges should be broughte in and stablyshed," where no man should possess "above a certeine measure of grounde, and that no man shoulde have in his stocke above a prescripte and appointed some of money . . . neither the kinge shoulde be of to greate power, neither the people to haute and wealthy, and that offices shoulde not be obteined by inordinate suite, or by brybes and gyftes."

In Utopia crime found no lurking corner ; there could be no inducement for wickedness in a place where the

whole island was “as it were one familie or householde,” where “they lyve together lovinglye.” Everything in this country was arranged on the best possible plan. Games were encouraged and happiness fostered, but vain and foolish parade of gold and jewels was unknown. War was a thing detested and abhorred; hunting forbidden as a cruel sport: “what delite can there be . . . in hearynge the barkynge and howlynge of dogges? . . . Or what greater pleasure is there to be felte, when a dogge followeth an hare, than when a dogge followeth a dogge? But yf the hope of slaughter and the expectation of tearynge in peces the beste doth please thee; thou shouldest rather be moved with pitie to see a selye innocente hare murdered of a dogge, the weake of the stronger, the fearfull of the feare, the innocent of the cruell and unmercyfull.”

How unlike the England of More’s own day was from the picture of so perfectly happy a region the author mournfully confesses in the concluding phrase of his story: “So must I nedes confesse and graunt that many things be in the Utopian weale publique whiche in our cities I maye rather wishe for than hope after.”

Meanwhile Henry looked more and more graciously upon his favourite. Soon after he had brought him to court he made him Privy Councillor, and in 1521 he created him a knight. More’s lovable disposition, which won everyone to his side, cast its spell over even the calculating king. Gradually he began to make heavier and heavier demands upon his minister, till he showed himself so selfish in requiring his attendance that it was seldom that the courtier was permitted to go home. “Not once in a month could he get leave to go to his wife and children (whose company he most desired)” and even when he managed to elude the king and snatch a brief

respite from court, he dared not stay more than two days away "but that he should be hither sent for again." Favour of so irksome a kind began to grow oppressive, and many a time More longed that the imperious sovereign would have some regard for the private feelings of his minister ! But thoughtfulness for others was not one of Henry's virtues, and More was unwillingly forced to submit. As a means of securing the liberty for which he chafed, he even tried to dissemble his sunny spirits and exhibit a moodiness which was foreign to him. But Henry cheerfully ignored the hint, and instead of setting his minister free he drew him more tightly within his grasp, by making him Treasurer of the Exchequer in 1521. Two years later he was appointed Speaker of the House of Commons, though, "being very loth to take this room upon him," he made an oration praying that the office might be given to another. But the king would take no refusal and More was obliged to confess : "I am therefor and always shall be ready obediently to conform myself to the accomplishment of your Highness' pleasure and commandment."

Scarcely had he taken up his new post when a heavy subsidy for the king was demanded through Wolsey, who declared he would come in person to ask for the loan. During Henry's reign there had been no good feeling between the Commons and the cardinal, and at the moment an additional small matter had arisen to increase the irritation. Wolsey had complained that the members showed so little restraint, that as soon as anything was done or spoken in the Commons, it was "immediately blown abroad in every ale-house." The imputation had been resented by Parliament, and now, at the news of his coming, it was agreed to admit him with all pomp. "Masters," quoth Sir Thomas More, "forasmuch as my

Lord Cardinal lately, ye wot well, laid to our charge the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this house, it shall not in my mind be amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, his pollaxes, his crosses, his hat and the Great Seal too ; to the intent that if he find the wise fault with us hereafter, we may be the bolder from ourselves to lay the blame on those that his Grace bringeth hither with him."

Thus by-and-by the cardinal approached, proudly self-conscious of the atmosphere of greatness which followed him wherever he went. With slow dignity he made his way to the front and there set himself to harangue the Commons. In a long and solemn oration he urged upon them the necessity of granting the huge sum he demanded as imperative for meeting the expenses of the king's war with France. At last he won his way to the end of his speech, where he paused, expecting to receive an answer. None came. He paused yet a little longer ; but still no reply was to be heard. "Masters !" he cried impatiently. " You have many wise and learned men amongst you, and sith I am from the King's own person sent hither unto you for the preservation of yourselves and all the realm, I think it meet you give me some reasonable answer." But the Commons sat stolidly staring before them, as if they had heard never a word. Exasperated out of all patience, the cardinal addressed first one and then another by name. But none deigned to give him a reply, for beforehand they had all agreed that their answer should be made through the speaker, More. Turning at last to this latter, Wolsey entreated for a reply, whereupon More fell on his knees, and humbly but firmly declared that "he alone in so weighty a matter was unmeet to make his Grace answer." Thus the cardinal was on every hand baffled, for neither would any of the Commons open his lips, nor would More

voice their opinions. Full of chagrin and anger Wolsey made his way out, leaving victory with the Commons. More had won the day, but the cardinal did not forgive him, and later meeting him, he said tartly : “Would to God you had been at Rome, Master More, when I made you Speaker.” The answer was unexpected, for More said simply and with evident sincerity : “Your Grace not offended, so would I too, my lord.”

News of the scene in the Commons, and the defiance of More, was duly reported to Henry by the furious cardinal. But even this opposition could not make the king angry with his favourite. He went so far as to visit him unawares at Chelsea, and walked up and down the garden with his arm laid affectionately within that of his minister. But these shows of affection were not misunderstood by the recipient of his favour, and after one such visit, when his son-in-law complimented him upon the king’s open friendliness, More replied shrewdly : “I thank our Lord, I find his Grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me, as any subject within this realm : howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof, for if my head would win him a castle in France . . . it should not fail to go.”

Already it would seem that the statesman had some premonition of the dark fate which was before long to engulf him.

For the present, however, the king’s favour shone more and more brightly upon him, and after the fall of Wolsey in 1529, Henry appointed him Lord Chancellor, in which office he showed himself so much above bribery, and so scrupulous and honourable in all his doings, that with every opportunity to enrich himself he took less than that which was his bare due. Even his friends and relations sometimes laughed at his scrupulous honesty, to which



Sir Thomas More

After Holbein

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the chancellor made reply : “ I assure thee, on my faith, that if the parties will at hands call for justice, then all-were-it my father stood on the one side, and the Devil on the other, his cause being good, the Devil should have right.”

Before long however events took an unfavourable turn, and when he seemed to be at the zenith of favour he fell suddenly into disgrace through his religious opinions. In 1532 he was superseded in the chancellorship, and not having enough money to maintain his former mode of life, he lived for a time in complete retirement. Meanwhile London was full of excitement over the “ Nun of Kent,” a servant girl who said she had been sent to declaim against the king’s marriage with Anne Boleyn. The city was soon in a ferment over her prophecies, and not without reason she was seized and tried. At her trial she confessed she was only the tool of others, but the sentence of death was nevertheless passed upon her and in 1534 she was executed. More was suspected of having a share in the plot, because of his well-known antipathy towards the marriage of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, and he was actually included in the bill of attainder. But his name was later struck out, owing to his great popularity. Nevertheless he was shortly summoned to London to take the Oath of Succession. He was scarcely surprised at the demand and the crisis found his calm demeanour utterly unmoved. He saw that for him it was but the beginning of the end, and as the boat shot off from his house on the river at Chelsea and he moved to Lambeth, he whispered to his son-in-law, Roper: “The field is won.” The remark puzzled Roper, who thought that it implied some means of escape. But More was not thinking of his safety ; his mind was fixed far beyond the present, and for him the field *was* won. He was willing to agree to the Oath of Succession, but he refused to be inveigled

into acquiescing in the divorce of Catharine. He would never deny the supremacy of the Pope nor confess the validity of the Boleyn marriage. In the meantime he was sent to the Tower, and though several attempts were made to induce him to pronounce the words which would procure him his liberty, he persisted in his refusal. From time to time his relatives were allowed to visit him, but they, too, were unable to shake his resolution. His second wife, whom he had married upon the death of the daughter of Colte, saw no reason why her husband should wilfully suffer death. One day she came bustling into his prison, determined to procure his release : "Master More," quoth she, "I marvel that you that have been always hitherto taken for so wise a man will now play the fool to lie here in this close filthy prison, and be content thus to be shut up among mice and rats, when you might be abroad at your liberty, and with the favour and good will both of the King and his Council if you would but do as all the bishops and best learned of this realm have done. And seeing you have at Chelsea a right fair house, your library, your gallery, your garden, your orchard, and all other necessaries so handsome about you . . . I muse what a God's name you mean here still thus fondly to tarry." To all this More listened with his usual sweetness, after which he replied gently. "Is not this house," quoth he, "as nigh Heaven as mine own ? . . . Well then, Mistress Alice, if it be so, it is very well. For I see no great cause why I should much joy in gay house, or in anything thereunto belonging, when if I should but seven years lie buried under the ground and then arise and come thither again, I should not fail to find someone therein that would bid me get out of doors, and tell me it were none of mine. What cause have I then to like such a house, as would so soon forget his master ? "

Even the ruthless Thomas Cromwell must have shrunk for a moment from shedding the blood of one of such proud nobility, but in the end the sentence of death was passed upon him, and on the 6th of July 1535 the sentence was carried out.

To the last moment of his life More retained his gay, sunny temper and his steadfast mind. He forgot no one, not even his executioner, to whom he sent a gold noble, and when the man hesitated to raise the axe, he cried : “ Pluck up thy spirits, man, and be not afraid to do thine office.”

The day before his execution he wrote to his daughter Margaret, whom he dearly loved : “ I would be sorry if it should be any longer than to-morrow. For it is Saint Thomas Eve : . . . it were a day very meet and convenient for me.” A day or two earlier he had also remarked : “ I thanked God that my case was such here in this matter, through the clearness of mine own conscience, that though I might have pain, I could not have harm. For a man may in such a case lose his head and have no harm.”

The news of his execution was received with grief, not only in England, but among scholars on the Continent. Some few among the Protestants whom he had opposed saw nothing in his violent death for which to be sorry. But those who had known him well, realised that the axe had taken life from one of purest character and of most noble aspirations. Even those who had known him but slightly felt that he had proved himself a man singularly free from self-seeking, and his bitterest enemy could find no stain in his career upon which to lay an accusing finger. In conduct and intellect he is one of the foremost characters in English history, and the fragrance of his pure and honourable life still sweetens the air.

## EDMUND SPENSER

*“The land of Spenser is the land of Dream, but it is also the land of Rest. To read him is like dreaming awake, without even the trouble of doing it yourself, but letting it be done for you by the finest dreamer that ever lived, who knows how to colour his dreams like life, and make them move before you in music.”*—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

EDMUND SPENSER, the poet's poet, was born in 1552, the year before the accession of Queen Mary. The persecution which ensued, reached its height and subsided again while Spenser was still but a mere child, and Elizabeth had already been on the throne some eleven years before his schooldays were done. Very little is known of his childhood and early life. It is probable that his parents belonged to Lancashire and from there came to live in London. At any rate Spenser himself was born in the capital and afterwards educated there at the Merchant Taylors' School, then newly established. At school he showed great fondness for learning, and he went steadily from form to form till he was ready for college life. In April 1569 he prepared to set out for the university, and in the account books of his school, under the date 28th April 1569 is the entry : “To Edmund Spensore, scholler of the m'chante tayler scholl at his gowinge to penbrocke hall in chambridge, Xs.”

At the time of Spenser's matriculation, political struggle was in the air. By Elizabeth's order Mary Queen of Scots had been imprisoned for more than a year, and the country was beginning to show signs of the coming crisis. All

England was trembling with agitation over the Rebellion of the North, led by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who aimed at dethroning Elizabeth and placing the crown on Mary's head. But Spenser was by nature little inclined to take part in political excitement, and though at Cambridge he must have heard many discussions and different opinions about Mary's claim to the throne, and Elizabeth's treatment of her, he seems to have taken very little interest in the affairs of the world. His heart was fixed on learning, and in the academic air of Cambridge he found inspiration for his enthusiasm. He had come to college with a great love for poetry and an ambition that he, too, might some time make himself known by his verse. Faery music was already sounding in his ears, and each day it got clearer and more persistent. Meanwhile he bent himself to his studies, so that in 1576 he became Master of Arts, after which he quitted Cambridge. But if Spenser had been little inclined to embroil himself in politics during his college days, he had not held aloof from his fellow-students, amongst whom he had made more than one close friend. Of these the most important was Gabriel Harvey, through whom he finally became acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney. A warm friendship rapidly sprang up between Spenser and Sidney, who were from the first attracted to each other. Each had a pure and lofty disposition; each was singularly free from self-seeking; each had a passion for learning. From another aspect this friendship brought a great deal to Spenser, for it proved the turning point in his worldly fortunes, and ultimately was the means of giving him the ease necessary to enable him to devote himself to poetry. For by-and-by Sidney introduced him to his uncle, Lord Leicester, who showed Spenser such favour that he gave him a post in his own household. After leaving college Spenser had

gone for a time to the north ; but Sidney's imperious friendship soon dragged him from his seclusion to the capital. Spenser found himself flung from the quiet of student life and obscurity into the brilliance of Elizabeth's court, then seething with excitement occasioned by the embassage which had come to England charged with a proposal of marriage between the queen and the Duke d'Alençon.

Under Sidney's encouragement, Spenser published the *Shepherd's Calendar*, a volume which consisted of twelve eclogues, each dedicated to one of the months. The book appeared without the author's name, since he feared that if it should be received with disfavour it might bring prejudice against him. But his fears were soon set at rest, for the *Calendar* was not only well received but highly praised. Spenser's share in it was soon guessed, and though he did not openly acknowledge the authorship the book was generally looked upon as his.

The poet was by this time twenty-seven. If he had been late in proving his genius, he had now done so with such effectiveness that henceforth he was acknowledged as a master among poets. He was too modest to see in his work any reason for self-esteem ; too true a poet to be content without proving his powers to their fullest. The idea of the *Faerie Queene* was already in his mind, and his heart beat with delight as he set himself to follow the path he had always longed to tread. He realised he had gained a hearing, and with the true spirit of the artist, ever restlessly pursuing the chosen way, he cast about in his mind how he might accomplish yet greater things. With Sidney's enthusiasm to stimulate him, and the praise of the *Shepherd's Calendar* sounding pleasantly in his ears, his passion for beauty and poetry leapt to its height, and through his imagination swept scene after scene,

later to find a place in the pageant of his great allegory.

Since the days of Chaucer, poetry had greatly languished. There had, indeed, been several poets, but none of supreme importance. The great nobles who were the natural patrons of literature had been too busy during the struggle of the Wars of the Roses to give heed to anything except battle. Poetry, forced to go a-begging, had sunk into unregarded obscurity.

But the strong rule of the Tudors brought with it golden days for literature. Moreover at this moment the entire continent of Europe was being stirred with an emotion that had its root in a desire for knowledge. The New Learning sprang into birth as a direct result of this great wave of feeling. England was late in being touched by the movement. Her position, isolated by sea from the neighbouring Continental countries, was in itself some explanation of this tardiness. The civil war, too, under the houses of York and Lancaster, had left her for the time bewildered, and unable to concentrate herself upon those arts which flourish in peace. But from the reign of Henry VIII. onward, the desire for learning gradually increased, till now in the middle of Elizabeth's sovereignty it had reached a high level. The first great poet to represent its spirit was Spenser, who thus stands at the head of a new epoch in the history of English literature.

Spenser's natural love for colour; the temper of the time, which delighted itself in rich shows and elaborate devices of costume; the political stress of the moment, which made direct writing a matter of personal danger; all these things inclined the poet towards giving his muse a setting not that of his own day. Thus for poems of peace and love he sought a pastoral background and wrote about shepherds and shepherdesses; poems of romance and war he set in

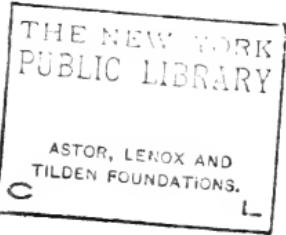
the frame of knight-errantry. Under these disguises he could indulge the rich fancy of his mind, and he could also secure himself against attack, by so concealing the real character of the personages mentioned in his works that no one could say definitely that the remarks were directed against any particular individual. Thus, for instance, when the first books of the *Faerie Queene* made their appearance, those who understood the full meaning of the poem saw that it contained really three stories in one. It was the story of a soul on its pilgrimage from earth to the world beyond ; it was the story of the triumph of the Reformation over the old faith ; it was the story of Elizabeth and her political struggles. But so skilfully were all three blended together that only those who looked closely could see the second and third meanings, and many people might read the poem from beginning to end and find in it nothing but a great and beautiful narrative, told in a new kind of verse full of magic to the ear.

As yet, however, the *Faerie Queene* was only written in the mind of the poet : none of it had been put into words. Spenser was still trying to discover the best possible way in which to express the ideas struggling within him.

Meanwhile, in 1580 a sign of further favour came to him, for he was appointed secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, who was going to Ireland on matters connected with the Government. Two years passed in this way, and in the midst of all his duties for his new master Spenser must have found very little time for writing. But the vision was always with him, and he never let it become dimmed by any thought of winning renown in some other way. He wanted above all else to be a poet ; the life of a courtier or of a diplomatist was little to his liking. It was therefore with a feeling of intense joy that he learnt, in 1586,



Edmund Spenser



that through the efforts of his friends the queen had granted him the estate and castle of Kilcolman, situated near the town of Cork, and formerly owned by the rebel Earl of Desmond. Here Spenser willingly hastened, for he saw in this retreat, situated in the midst of splendid scenery, and far removed from the excitements of court, an opportunity of leading that quiet life which alone would enable him to carry out that great wish of his heart, the writing of the *Faerie Queene*. Here he achieved his desire, for six books of his poem were written during his stay in Ireland ; but here also he met with a tragedy, which was ultimately to bring his life to a close under conditions of misery and distress. As yet, however, the sun still shone, and when Spenser took up his abode in the splendid old castle his heart throbbed with content.

Between 1586 and 1589 he lived quietly in Ireland, happy at finding his lot cast in the midst of beautiful scenery, and luxuriating in the pleasure of withdrawing from the world to work out the plan he had long carried in his heart.

In this way three years passed by, years which in England were marked by turmoil and bloodshed. In 1587 Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded ; the next year saw the hopes of Philip of Spain blasted, and the triumph of the Queen of England completed in the defeat of the Armada. The country ran riot with excitement, and a sudden tide of patriotism rose and threatened to drown every other feeling. But in his home amid the rugged mountains of Cork, Spenser was little touched by the throb of events in England. He was busy upon his great work ; one book of the *Faerie Queene* was already done.

By 1589 the next two books were ready. Diffident

about their merit Spenser showed the manuscript to his friend, Sir Walter Raleigh, who happened to be then in Ireland. Raleigh's decision was entirely favourable, and with generous enthusiasm he persuaded Spenser to return with him to England and himself present the poems to the queen. The experiment succeeded even better than Raleigh had hoped. Elizabeth was pleased with the dedication, in which the poet had boldly declared that he dedicated, presented and consecrated to her in all humility his poem "to live with the eternitie of her fame." She relished the delicate flattery which depicted her as "Gloriana" or "the Faerie Queene," who rewarded knights and upheld the cause of purity and honour ; and as a mark of her favour she bestowed on the author a pension of £50 yearly. Whether this sum was ever actually received regularly by the poet is, however, a matter of some doubt. Elizabeth did not always take care to see that the benefits dictated by her impulse were carried out into practical expression. But indirectly her graciousness brought him great benefit. For the news of it soon spread throughout the court and from there to the world beyond. Booksellers were on the alert for his work, and in 1591 when the poet returned to Ireland, his fame in England was already well established.

Three years had passed between the time when Spenser had first gone to Kilcolman and the year when he returned to England, taking with him the first three books of his poem. Now three more years went by in the same quiet, uneventful way, and then came a day when Spenser married. By this time he was forty-two, grave and thoughtful, full of the purpose of his life, yet eager in friendship, kind hearted and generous to those whom he loved. Nothing is known of his bride except what he himself says in one of his poems : "she was certes but a

countrey lasse." But for her he wrote one of his finest poems, a wedding ode, entitled *Epithalamion*:

"*Fayre is my love, when her fayre golden heares  
With the loose wynd ye waving chance to marke ;  
Fayre, when the rose in her red cheekes appeares ;  
Or in her eyes the fire of love does sparke.!!*

Spenser's marriage took place in 1594; two years later he made another journey to England, taking with him the next three books of the *Faerie Queene*. At the same time he published a new edition of the first three parts, so that now the whole six books appeared together. His business with the printer being done, he made his way back to Ireland, hoping to take up again the peaceful existence which he had enjoyed for the past ten years. But a change was at hand for him. Through the suggestion of the queen he was made Sheriff of Cork in 1598, and official duties began to make heavy demands upon his energy and leisure, and the quiet of his country life was at once broken. As sheriff, he held no easy position. Ireland was throbbing with disaffection, and the poet was not at all fitted to cope with the turbulent O'Neale, Earl of Tyrone. In 1598 matters came to a crisis. Tyrone's followers had for long been in a state of revolt and now the disaffection spread to the neighbourhood of Cork. The sheriff was naturally a person upon whom their vengeance fell. Kilcolman Castle was attacked and burnt to the ground; and it was only by flight that Spenser and his wife escaped with their lives. In the confusion of the moment one of their children, a baby but a few months old, was left behind and perished in the flames. Broken-hearted at this disaster, penniless and harassed, Spenser took refuge in England. How different his return from that previous occasion when he

had come to present his first instalment of the *Faerie Queene* to Elizabeth ! Now Ireland was in the hands of rebels, and he dared not face the fury of his sovereign. Thus he sought out a quiet retreat in a squalid part of London, and here, worn out with disappointment and misfortune, he died three months later, in the early part of 1599. The news of his death quickly brought to the fore men who would have given willing help earlier, had they known of his condition. Essex's generosity provided all that was necessary, and the body of Spenser was borne to Westminster Abbey and placed near to that of Chaucer. His death marked the first landmark on the new road opened up to poetry. Nearly two hundred years had passed since Chaucer had set up his torch. Now Spenser had reared one as luminous. The interval between had been a barren waste, relieved here and there by the sudden glow of the flame of some minor poet ; but for the most part it had been a dark path. From Spenser onward, poet after poet was to spring forward with his flaming brand, and from his death to the death of Milton in 1674 the road of learning was fair and wide, and marked on all sides by radiant beacons. At the time when Spenser died, the greatest of Shakespeare's plays had not yet been written ; Milton's birth was still nine years distant. But everything was now ready for the crowning of literature, and before long that crowning came. Shakespeare rose to the height of his power, and the world received the treasure of his genius.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*"Priceless Shakespeare."*—CARLYLE

*"One who has said more about humanity than any other writer, and has said it better; . . . who has touched many spirits finely to fine issues, and has been for three centuries a source of delight and understanding, of wisdom and consolation."*

PROFESSOR RALEIGH

**I**N the year 1564, when the glory of early spring was upon the country ; when the hedges were covered with green of an exquisite daintiness ; when sprays of white blossoms showed upon the bare stems of the blackthorn ; when every almond-tree bore its shower of pink, and the great chestnuts stood with their soft, fan-shaped leaves freshly unrolled ; when the note of the cuckoo echoed swiftly and suddenly from the crest of one woodland slope to another ; at such a time, on the 23rd day of the month of sunshine and showers, was born William Shakespeare.

The first ray of light that fell upon him streamed through the window of a spacious farmhouse, and it was from here that he took his first stumbling step into life. His father was a man in comfortable circumstances at Stratford-on-Avon, and combined with his occupation of a farmer the trade of a butcher. Two such businesses could easily be carried on in conjunction with each other, and for a time John Shakespeare thrived. But when his son was still only a child of four, misfortune fell upon the father, and money became scarce in the household. In the midst of the discomfiture and upheaval which followed,

Shakespeare grew up into boyhood, going in due course to the local grammar school. Beyond this, very little is known of his early life, for none of those who knew him then, and least of all his father and mother, dreamt that the boy would one day touch a height of literary fame greater than any yet reached by Englishmen. From his later life we know enough to see that he had the gift of being able to gain the affection of others. And so in these early days we may picture him arm-in-arm with a school friend ; or off with a party of other boys to ransack the countryside of its treasure in field and hedge ; or rushing headlong to play on the village green, noisy with the sound of laughter in which Shakespeare had his full share.

So he passed from boyhood to early manhood, and already before he was nineteen he had married Ann Hathaway, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, who lived close by in the neighbourhood of Shottery. Four years later, curious perhaps to see more of the world, and aware also of the need of making an income for the requirements of his family, Shakespeare determined to go to London. Thither he set out in 1586 or 1587, bent upon making his living as an actor. Thus he began the career which was one day to bring him immortal fame. He set out lightly, without even an idea that he was beginning to foot the road of fame. All that he saw at present was the necessity that he should win a living for himself and his family ; for he was now the father of three children.

So he entered London, on the eve of that period which was to be the glory of Elizabeth's reign. Within the next few years the voyages of Drake, the defeat of the Armada, and the general outpouring of literary genius were to give the crown of Henry's great daughter a lustre that time should never dim.

When Shakespeare had been born, Edmund Spenser

and Sir Walter Raleigh were both boys of twelve; Sir Philip Sidney was ten, and Drake a young man of twenty-four. Now in the year 1587 these were all at the full height of their power, and the spirit of genius was moving swiftly through the air. Into this atmosphere of radiance and enthusiasm, Shakespeare stepped when he left Stratford to try his fortune in the city of London.

During the reign of the Tudors the condition of the drama had altered enormously. The first plays of any sort had been the mysteries and miracles of the thirteenth century. These had been largely religious performances, acted often in the churchyard itself, the clergy being the chief players. Gradually these primitive shows developed in character, and other actors were admitted. But these were carefully chosen by a picked committee of thirteen, and only those "sufficient in personne and connyng" were allowed to share in the privilege. During the time of the Wars of the Roses the mysteries underwent a rapid change; moralities or "allegorical plays" began to take the place of what had been, properly speaking, religious tableaux. In these moralities, virtue and vice found a part, virtue being ever loudly applauded, whilst vice in the shape of the follies of the world received many shrewd hits and gibes.

Under Henry VII. the nobles began to include in their household a regular company of players, who thus became known by the name of their master—the Duke of York's company and so on. Regular stages had meanwhile been adopted. These were of wood and were movable. They consisted of a room underneath for dressing purposes and a platform on top of which the play was performed. Thus "Every company had his pagiant or parte, which pagiants weare a high seafolde with two rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon four wheeles. In the lower they apparelled themselves and in the higher rowme they played, being

all open on the tope, that all behoulders myghte heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every streete. They began first at the abay gates, and when the firste pagiante was played it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the mayor, and so to every streete."

As plays gradually altered in character they began to reflect the political events of the day. Thus *Lusty Juventus* upheld the cause of the Reformation, and *Wyt and Science* proved the influence of the New Learning by its denunciation of Ignorance and Idleness. Nevertheless, plays were still very primitive and unlike the drama which was to burst into sudden flower under Elizabeth, and so prepare the way for Shakespeare.

The first great writer of the new order was Christopher Marlowe, a man of powerful genius, whose early death in 1593 cut short a life of great promise. In 1587, the year in which Shakespeare entered London, Marlowe produced a play called *Tamburlane*, which marks a new era in the history of the stage. In plot and handling it far surpassed any play which had yet been witnessed. Written moreover in blank verse, it exhibited a freshness and a vigour new to the drama of the day, and Shakespeare himself must have learnt not a little from some of the plays of his brilliant contemporary.

Side by side with Marlowe flourished a little knot of young and ambitious playwrights, amongst whom were Peele, Greene, and Kyd, all of them men of ability and even genius. But the greater genius of Shakespeare was about to manifest itself and overshadow all those who had so far been first in popular favour. "This upstart Crow beautified with our feathers," they grumbled, "that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you." It was futile

to attempt to depreciate Shakespeare, but there was some excuse for their soreness of heart ; for Shakespeare was but a novice when already he bade fair to outshine the old favourites of the playgoers.

Meanwhile, after some ups and downs of fortune, Shakespeare had joined one of the companies in the city and so entered upon his new career. Practically nothing is known of his life at this period, but there is evidence that his reputation was gradually spreading, and that he was drawing round him a circle of friends who were for the most part among the chief literary figures of the day. One of his most intimate acquaintances was Ben Jonson, himself the leader of a band of young men, who lavished upon their chief a wealth of affection and esteem, thus winning for themselves a nickname which they proudly bore, the “Tribe of Ben.” Jonson’s secure position had little to fear from any rivalry, and moreover his generous soul was above littleness or jealousy. He dwelt with delight upon the development of Shakespeare’s genius, and after his death he wrote of him : “I loved the man and do honour his memory this side idolatry.”

It is quite probable that at the outset of his career, Shakespeare was content to retouch the work of others, and perform other services of literary drudgery, rather than launch out into original work. But in doing so he was only marking time. Fresh from a quiet country village, where if emotions were strong they were usually elemental, he looked with some astonishment upon the confused pageant of human feeling which now passed beneath his gaze. Nevertheless his eye gleamed at the contemplation. Here was a task worth the doing ; here was a knot to unravel. He deliberately stretched out his hand to clutch at a corner of the many-hued web, and grasping it he set himself to understand the matters of life

and death which were woven thereon. But if he set himself to read the hearts of men he did not assume the position of a hermit-philosopher. He wrote from his own vital experiences of life, not from superficial theories based upon those of other people. He flung himself headlong into life ; he sported upon its surface ; he probed it to its depths. He was eager for joy, but he did not shrink from sorrow ; he sipped at every emotion and counter-emotion attendant upon each action. He was a psychologist before even the term describing that "hope of a science" had been so much as breathed. It is this universality of Shakespeare which is so stupendous ; it is this which overwhelms us. There are many who can write well upon one side of life ; a few who can grasp several of its myriad aspects at once ; but of Shakespeare it may be said that he ranged over the whole ; that he missed no corners ; neglected no byways. An effete world, jaded by the eulogies of countless critics, may perhaps languidly question his right to such magnificent praise ; but Shakespeare himself is his own answer. A single play read over carefully with unprejudiced mind is enough to silence any dissentient thought. Nowhere else is there such width, such spaciousness, such abundance. To dip into his plays is like dipping into a well which has no bottom.

Shakespeare's earliest productions were largely concerned with themes of love. His age and his own marriage naturally explain the choice of this mode of expressing himself. *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are both warm with passion, and each is fragrant with those country scents which were still fresh in his own remembrance. The poems were published hard upon each other, the one in 1593 and the other in 1594. The fact that during the earlier of these years the theatres

in London had been closed on account of the plague, has given rise to the suggestion that it was owing to lack of more active occupation, either as an actor, or as a hack writer on behalf of other dramatists, that Shakespeare resolved to put his own work to the test of print. The Earl of Southampton allowed the poet to name him as his patron, and *Venus and Adonis* achieved more success than its author had dared to hope. Once he had ventured upon the sea of composition Shakespeare's fancies came thick and strong. He soon discovered that mere classical themes, such as he had used in *Venus and Adonis*, would not suffice his geniis. He recognised that he must draw life at first hand, and so he threw himself more ardently than ever into discovering the means by which he might best realise himself. Naturally enough he turned to drama, and at once he discovered his medium. Greene, and his brother actors, might bemoan Shakespeare's arrogance, but they could do nothing to stop him. Once he had set out on the way, he would pursue it to the end. Meanwhile ideas crowded into his mind, and play after play made its appearance, so that between the years 1588 and 1594 he had given to the world *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III.*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. Such extraordinary fertility might have seemed to forebode that before long the poet would find he had exhausted himself. It was not so, however ; he was still only feeling his way. For the most interesting feature of all Shakespeare's work is the fact that each play marks a new step in his personal development. He did not write, as is too often the custom in modern days, first a play, then a book of essays, then a rondeau, each indi-

vidual and distinct, but expressive of no regular growth. Shakespeare's plays mark the procession of his life. They tell in tableaux the emotions which distinguished his own experience from point to point of his maturity. If we understand them aright, then we shall understand Shakespeare. They have more to tell of the man himself than the wisest books of criticism ; for they reflect his image from the opening of his career to its end.

So this first period of his work is a very epitome of the *joie de vivre*, and reveals Shakespeare as a man of feeling, in the springtime of life, thrilled with love and hope, and looking out upon the earth with young, glad eyes. There are unavoidable immaturities in composition, such as a fondness for rhymes, weak endings to some of the lines, and above all an indulgence in punning. Nevertheless even these early dramas are not the haphazard output of haphazard cleverness ; they have the real stuff in them, and in *Romeo and Juliet* at least is a prescience of future grandeur. That inimitable breath of awe which hovers round so much of Shakespeare's verse is abroad in the garden scene, and there is horror, and a gleam of heart-stilling power, in Juliet's words as she looks down from the balcony upon her lover :

"Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb."

From themes of love Shakespeare turned to history, and so between 1595 (the year in which *King John* was most probably written) and 1601, or the date of *All's Well that Ends Well*, we get the chronicle plays, *King John*, *Richard II.*, *Henry IV.*, and *Henry V.*, and the comedies, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*. This group represents at once Shakespeare's

strong national feeling and the continuance of his delight in life. The years had not as yet robbed him of his belief in the goodness of mankind ; he had reached maturity, but his illusions were unshattered. The melancholy Jacques in " As You Like It " might soliloquise at length upon life, but Shakespeare's own conclusion as yet was always :

*" Heigho ! the holly,  
This life is most jolly."*

In the play of *Henry V.* the poet set himself to depict a great national hero. So with patriotic enthusiasm he swept up all the virtues most attractive to himself, and rolling them into one character he labelled it " Henry V. "

It is a pompous and splendid play, full of sound and colour, but is not one whose personality endears itself to the reader. The king no doubt is a magnificent figure, but he is so secure from human failings, that it is not surprising if at times he himself is oppressed by the sense of his office and his perfection :

*" Upon the king ! let us our lives, our souls,  
Our debts, our careful wives,  
Our children, and our sins lay on the king !  
We must bear all. O hard condition !  
Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath  
Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel  
But his own wringing. What infinite heart's ease  
Must kings neglect that private men enjoy !  
And what have kings that privates have not too  
Save ceremony, save general ceremony ? "*

Thus bemoaned, Henry's lot is indeed a hard one, and if he is depicted as a figure whose aspirations and achieve-

ments are above the reach of ordinary men, he at least has to pay the price. For the note of warm humanity, which makes most of Shakespeare's characters into living men, is here wanting. Henry's colossal figure is one to be admired, but hardly one to be loved.

By the year 1601, half of the time which Shakespeare was to spend in literary toil had gone by, and his reputation was long since secure. But if he was gathering money and fame in London, his eye was ever looking beyond its narrow streets and crowded footways to the cool, sweet-scented lanes and open fields of Stratford. Though he loved the profession in which his genius found easy and brilliant expression, he also cherished a passion for the peaceful homestead he had known as a boy. He determined that once he should be able, he would return and take up again the peaceful life he had laid down, in the midst of such anxious thought for the future. His father's fortunes had meanwhile improved, so that when John Shakespeare died in 1601 his son inherited considerable property. But though upon the material side of life Shakespeare's comfort was increased, his mental outlook was beginning to get more and more troubled. As he bent his eye upon the kaleidoscope of life he saw the pattern of it gradually change, and gazing, he observed dark blots making their appearance upon what he had so far regarded as a fair mosaic. Dim thoughts of evil and unhappiness crowded into his mind, and he stood spellbound by the spectacle of the unlovely side of life. He was seized with distress and despair, and with Hamlet he asked bitterly :

“To be or not to be; that is the question ?”

To this dark period, stretching from 1601 to 1608, belong the plays *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for*

*Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and the four great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*. These four last dramas, written in an ascending scale of bitterness, mark at once the height of Shakespeare's art and the depth of his pessimism. Treachery, wickedness, ingratitude, cruelty, revenge,—these are his themes, pictured in the blackest colours, unrelieved by any lighter tints.

But Shakespeare was not to contemplate for ever the worst side of life. His very universality made it impossible that he should be permanently enslaved in morbid habits of thought, and in due time his buoyant, wholesome outlook reasserted itself. The transition was not accomplished suddenly; for healing did not come all at once, and it was not till Shakespeare had cast his eye upon the historical figures of classical times that his optimism began to revive. *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon of Athens* (this last only in part the work of Shakespeare), all belong to the transition stage in the last great period of his career, from 1608 to 1612. In the contemplation of these characters of history, the kaleidoscope again changed for Shakespeare, and he saw more clearly the fashion in which both the evil and the good of life fit together into one whole. Life after all was noble; and the *joie de vivre* a natural and desirable emotion. *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* express this change in attitude,—a change by which things of evil fall back into the dim shadows and the foreground is once more filled with easeful scenes and jocund figures.

And so, when the curtain falls upon Shakespeare, there is in the air the same breath of fragrance and hope which issued forth when first it was raised. The poet had drawn both prizes and blanks in life's lottery, but his own

conclusion is that life itself is the prize of prizes. He is no longer dallying with Hamlet over futile philosophies, bewildered as to whether it is better to be or not to be. His answer is single and decisive. It is so good to be, that whatever there is of evil or unhappiness attendant upon existence nevertheless it is still ecstasy to live. Like the revengeful nettle, life has its sting : but let it be grasped manfully and there will be no power to hurt.

One remaining branch of his work remains to be noticed, the *Sonnets*. These marvellous songs are at once the joy and the perplexity of all students of Shakespeare. The first known reference to them is to be found in Francis Meres' *Wit's Treasury*, published in 1598, in which he refers to the "sugared sonnets" of the "mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare." Written in three quatrains with a rhymed couplet at the end, the sonnets do not pretend to belong to the regular Italian model. They stand in a niche of their own, exquisite examples of unerring poetic skill. Controversy has raged fiercely as to whether they represent Shakespeare's true feelings, or whether they are to be regarded as poems of fancy. Are they merely conventional, or do they hide the story of Shakespeare's own life ? The bitterness and passion with which they are inspired suggest that they are really auto-biographical ; that they stand for the ecstasies and despairs which passed through Shakespeare's own heart, flinging him now into a tumult of delight, now into a gulf of despair.

The dedication offers them to "W. H.," two simple initials which have formed an insuperable stumbling-block to commentators. The general view interprets them as signifying William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and nephew to Sir Philip Sidney. Whether the sonnets are regarded purely as poetry, or whether they are viewed as

an indication of Shakespeare's own aspirations, they must in either case be cherished as amongst the rarest of our literary treasures.

The hope of some day going back to the restful seclusion of Stratford-on-Avon was never far from the poet's mind, and ever since his fortunes had become improved he had dwelt more and more frequently upon the prospect of return. Other legacies, besides the one which he had received upon his father's death, came at intervals to him, and he began to make active plans for possessing land in his native place. In *The Tempest* he made his farewell to the stage. Of his own will Prospero lays aside his magic; so too the poet voluntarily puts down his pen. And though in strict sequence *The Winter's Tale* was probably written after *The Tempest*, yet the dates of the two were close, and *The Tempest* is generally acclaimed as the fitting, and intended, climax to Shakespeare's career.

"But this rough magic  
I here abjure : . . . :  
I'll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,  
I'll drown my book."<sup>12</sup>

Thus Shakespeare the playwright put by his pen, and went to that small, green spot, Stratford, which had dwelt so persistently in his mind. Here, if the tools of the man of letters were allowed to rust, it is certain that there was still play for those greater weapons of observation, and sympathy, and humour, which had made Shakespeare a student of men as well as a student of letters. Village life with its comedies and tragedies in little; its frenzies and its apathy; its ignorance and its knowledge; must have furnished him a fascinating spectacle. Here

would he see around him the world in miniature ; the village would afford a stage, not too large to be oppressive, but yet of a size to exhibit the passions and failings and triumphs of the race.

So it was with contentment in his heart that Shakespeare turned aside from the open activities of London to take up the less apparent activities of country life. Since that crucial year when he had first gone, a youth not much above twenty, to seek his fortune in London, there had been many a change in his home. His only son had long since died, and in 1607 his eldest daughter had married. No doubt Shakespeare had spent much of his time between 1600 and 1612 in Stratford, but it was not till the latter year that he definitely quitted the theatre. In February 1616, Judith, the only remaining daughter at home, was married, and two months later Shakespeare himself died. He died as he had been born, in April, and on the twenty-third day of the month. At the time of his death he was only in middle life, being but fifty-two years of age. He had lived beyond Tudor days and seen the union of the crowns of England and Scotland by the accession of James I. He had heard the tumult roused by the Gunpowder Plot ; he had observed with his penetrating eye the foolish and high-handed behaviour of James towards his Parliament. But matters of State were of small concern to Shakespeare. His interest was in humanity ; the pettiness of individuals and their systems might harass the soul of a statesman or a reformer, but to one who scanned the world with the open gaze of genius these were matters of trifling importance. He looked rather within the heart of man, where he saw bewildering scenes of emotion succeeding fast upon one another. Every phase of character had its interest for him, and in man he saw the world. Now he is dead the world sees in him a man whose

genius comprehended all men. The whole of his literary writings were compassed between the years 1588 and 1612. Twenty-four summers thus gave to England *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, the *Sonnets*, and more than thirty plays. Years passed by, and the nation awoke with a sudden surprise to the greatness of the work which had been accomplished by one William Shakespeare ; and now not only England but all the world acclaims him as one of the greatest writers yet born.

The four great periods into which his work falls have been described by a modern critic in the phrases : “ In the Workshop ” (1588-1594) ; “ In the World ” (1594-1600) ; “ In the Depths ” (1600-1608) ; and “ On the Heights ” (1609-1612). Interpreted in this way they form an easy guide to the story of Shakespeare’s career.

And so, having fought his way through fears and difficulties to triumph, Shakespeare’s life ends fittingly in the quiet of the little village, where he had first gazed in baby wonderment upon the daisied fields around him, now become immortal because he once dwelt among them.

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